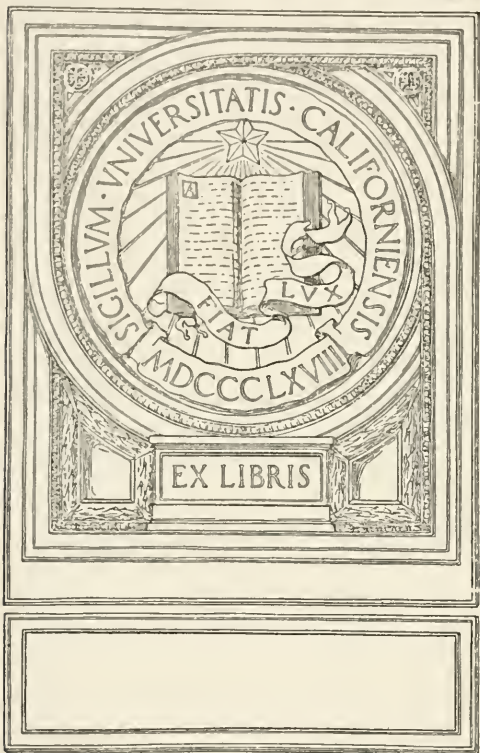


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Æsop's Fables

Together with

The Life of Æsop

By

Mons. De Meziriac.



Chicago and New York:
Rand, McNally & Company,
Publishers.

BROADWAY DEPARTMENT STORE,
LOS ANGELES, CAL.

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Prof. Taylor
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PREFACE.

The fables of Æsop have always been esteemed the best lessons for youth, as best adapted to convey the most useful maxims, in the most agreeable manner. Accordingly many writers, both in verse and prose, have endeavored to clothe them in an English dress. It would ill become the author of this work to animadvert upon their labors; but he thinks it may be said with truth, and he hopes also with modesty, that nothing of this kind which has been published in prose, can justly discourage him from the present undertaking.

In forming this collection, he has endeavored to distinguish the respective compositions of the earlier and later mythologists; and he trusts it will not be found that he has often been mistaken in this regulation, though an error of that kind might perhaps appear of no great importance. His principal aim was to select such Fables as would make the strongest and most useful impressions on the minds of youth; and then to offer them in such unaffected language, as might have some tendency to improve their style. If in this he have at all succeeded, the work, it is presumed, will not be unserviceable to young readers, nor wholly unentertaining to persons of maturer judgment.

To these he has ventured to add a number of original Fables; and he offers them to the public with all the diffidence which ought to accompany every modern production, when it appears in conjunction with writings of established reputation. Indeed, whatever hopes he has,

that the present work may be favorably received, arise chiefly from the consideration, that he has been assisted in it by gentlemen of the most distinguished abilities; and that several, both of the old and the new Fables, are not written by himself, but by authors, with whom it is an honor to be connected, and who having condescended to favor him with their assistance, have given him an opportunity of making some atonement for his own defects.

The life of *Æsop* prefixed to this collection, is taken from Mons. de Meziriac, a very learned and ingenious Frenchman; who being disgusted with the gross forgeries of Planudes, published in 1632 the best account he could collect from ancient writers of good authority. But this little book soon after became so extremely scarce, that Mons. Bayle, in the first edition of his dictionary, laments he never could get a sight of it; Dr. Bentley in his dissertation on *Æsop's Fables* makes much the same complaint; nor does it appear that Sir Roger Lestranger or Dr. Croxal, ever so much as heard of Meziriac's name. The work indeed in the original has continued equally scarce to this day; but an English translation of it falling into the writer's hands, he has endeavored in some measure to correct the language; adding notes from several authors, particularly from Boyle's and Bentley's controversy on the subject; and he is persuaded that the judicious reader will not condemn him for adopting it, instead of the fictitious and absurd relation of Planudes.

THE LIFE OF ÆSOP.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE PLACE OF HIS BIRTH.

It happened to Homer, the prince of Grecian poets, that the place of his nativity was never certainly known; and it would be as difficult to ascertain the country which gave birth to Æsop, so much have ancient authors differed upon this subject also. Some have thought him a Lydian, born in the city of Sardis, the capital of that kingdom; others have believed he drew his origin from the island of Samos. Some have maintained that he was a Thracian, of the city of Mesembria; but authors are now, for the most part, agreed, that he was a native of Phrygia, either of Amorium, or Cotiæum, both towns in the same province. However, as it may be allowable to conjecture on a point so dubious, I imagine they who have thought him a Lydian, or a Samian, have grounded their opinion on the probability of his being born in one of those places where he spent the greatest part of his life; and it is certain that during his slavery, his common habitation was in the island of Samos; and after he was made free, he lived almost wholly in the court of Cræsus, king of Lydia. But though this opinion is not totally destitute of a plausible appearance, the probability of his being a Phrygian, as it is founded on the common consent of many ancient writers, and supported by the most credible authority, is now generally received and established.

It may perhaps be acceptable to some readers, and not improper in this place, to add a passage from the learned Mr. Sale, in his notes to the Koran, concerning the Eastern fabulist Lokman, who has been imagined by some writers to be the same person with our Æsop. The Arabian writers, says he, affirm that Lokman was the son of Bâuvan, who was the son or grandson of a sister or aunt of Job; and that he lived several centuries, even to the time of David, with whom he was conversant in Palestine. According to the description they give of his person, he must have been deformed enough; for they say he was of a black complexion (whence some call him an Ethiopian) with thick lips, and splay feet; but in return, he received from God wisdom and eloquence in a great degree; which, some pretend, were given him in a vision, on his making choice of wisdom preferably to the gift of prophecy, either of which were offered him. The generality of the Mohammedans therefore hold him to have been no prophet, but only a wise man. As to his condition, they say he was a slave, but obtained his liberty on the following occasion. His master having one day given him a bitter melon to eat, he paid him such exact obedience as to eat it all; at which his master being surprised, asked him, How he could eat so bitter a fruit? To which he replied, It was no wonder, that he should for once accept a bitter fruit from the same hand from which he had received so many favors. The commentators mention several quick repartees of Lokman, which, together with the circumstances above mentioned, agree so well with what Maximus Planudes has written of Æsop, that from thence, and from the fables attributed to Lokman by the Orientals, the latter has been generally thought to be no other than the Æsop of the Greeks. However that be (for I think the matter will bear a dispute) I am of opinion that

Planudes borrowed great part of his life of Æsop from the traditions he met with in the East concerning Lokman, concluding them to have been the same person, because they were both slaves, and supposed to be the writers of those fables which go under their respective names, and bear a great resemblance to one another; for it has long been observed by learned men, that the greater part of that monk's performance is an absurd romance, and supported by no evidence of ancient writers.—*Salé's Koran*, p. 355.

A collection of Lokman's fables may be found in Erpenius's Arabic Grammar, between thirty and forty in number, printed in Arabic, with a Latin translation. They very much resemble the fables of Æsop, and have most of them been inserted in our collections: particularly, The stag drinking; The old man and death; The hare and the tortoise; The sun and the wind—all of which are in Erpenius's collection, under the name of Lokman.

CHAPTER II.

OF HIS PERSON, TALENTS, AND DISPOSITION.

It is allowed by all, that Æsop was a slave from his youth, and that in this condition, he served several masters: but I am ignorant where Planudes has authority for asserting that he was the most deformed of all men living, exactly resembling Homer's Thersites; I find no ancient author who thus describes him. What Planudes adds, that the word Æsop signifies the same with Æthiop, and was given him on account of the blackness of his visage, may also be very justly contradicted; for though some grammarians are of opinion, that from the verb ætho, which signifies to scorch, and from the noun ops, which signifies visage, the word Æthiop may be formed; yet we learn from Eustathius, that ætho (in the future æso) signifies to shine, as well as to burn; and that ops, with o long, signifies the eye; so that the name Æsop signifies a man with sparkling eyes. Neither do I give much credit to the same author, when he says, that Æsop had such an impediment in his tongue, that he could scarcely utter articulate sounds, as he seems to have attributed this imperfection to him, only to have some ground for the fabulous account which he afterwards gives, of Fortune's appearing to him in a dream, and bestowing on him the gift of speech. Altogether as void of probability is the story which Apollonius tells in Philostratus; that Mercury, having distributed to other persons the knowledge of all the sciences, had nothing left for Æsop but the art of making fables, with which he en-

dowed him. But a principal reason which prevents me from assenting to what Planudes advances, is, that it cannot be supported by authority from any ancient author; on the contrary, it is asserted in a Greek fragment of his life, found in the works of Aphthonius, that Æsop had an excellent disposition, and talents for every thing; and in particular, a great inclination and aptitude for music, which is not very consistent with his having a bad voice, and being dumb.

CHAPTER III.

OF HIS CONDITION, AND THE COURSE OF HIS STUDIES.

Æsop's first master, as may be gathered from the beforementioned Aphthonius, was Zemarchus, or Demarchus, surnamed Caresias, a native and inhabitant of Athens: and his passing some part of his youth in this famous city, the mother and nurse of science and polite learning, was of no small advantage to him. It is probable also, that his master, perceiving in him a good understanding, agreeable manners, lively genius, and a general capacity, and finding also that he served him with much affection and fidelity: it is probable, I say, that he might take care to get him instructed. It was from Athens then, as from the fountain head, that he drew the purity of the Greek language. It was there too that he acquired the knowledge of moral philosophy, which at that time was the fashionable study, there being but few persons who made profession of the speculative sciences, as may be concluded by the seven sages of Greece, the most celebrated men of that age, amongst whom Thales the Milesian alone had the curiosity to inquire into the secrets of natural philosophy, and into the subtleties of mathematical learning: the rest were not reputed wise for any other reason than their publishing certain grave and moral sentences, the truth of which they established and rendered of some authority by their prudent and virtuous lives. Æsop, indeed, did not follow their method: he wisely considered, that the meanness of his birth, and his servile condition, would not permit him to speak with suf-

ficient authority in the way of sentence and precept; he therefore composed fables, which by a narration pleasing and full of novelty, so charms the minds, even of the most ignorant, that through the pleasure which they receive from it, they taste imperceptibly the moral sense which lies concealed underneath.

I know very well that Æsop was not the inventor of those fables, in which the use of speech is given to animals. The honor of this invention, as Quintilian alleges, is justly due to the poet Hesiod, who in the first book of his "Works and Days," relates very prettily the fable of the hawk and the nightingale. Be this as it may, Æsop has advanced so far before every competitor, that all fables of this kind are called Æsopic, because a great number of them are of his composing; and the choicest precepts of moral philosophy are by his means conveyed to us in this agreeable manner. And indeed, I very highly approve the opinion of Apollonius, who maintains that the fables of Æsop are much more useful for the instruction of youth, than the fables of the poets; and his reasons for this assertion are very pertinent, as may be seen in Philostratus. But that Æsop composed all his fables during the time that he was a slave at Athens, I will not however affirm; I only think it probable, that it was there he first became enamored of morality, and laid the plan of teaching the most beautiful and useful maxims of philosophy, under the veil of fables; which nevertheless he might not publish till long afterwards, when he had obtained his freedom, had acquired the reputation of being one of the wisest and ablest men of Greece, and was arrived to great esteem, not only among the common people, but even with princes and kings.

CHAPTER IV.

OF HIS DIFFERENT MASTERS, AND OF HIS FELLOW
SERVANT, THE FAMOUS COURTESAN, RHODOPIS

Let us now resume the thread of our narration. In process of time, Æsop was sold to Xanthus, a native of the island of Samos; and after he had served him for a certain time, he was again disposed of to the philosopher Idmon, or Jadmon, who was likewise of that country; and had at the same time for his slave that Rhodopis, who was afterwards so famous as a courtesan. This woman was endowed with very extraordinary beauty, and happening to be carried into Egypt, Charaxus, the brother of Sappho the poetess, fell so deeply in love with her, that he sold all he had, and reduced himself to extreme poverty, in order to redeem and set her at liberty. She afterwards rose to such eminence in her vocation, and amassed such heaps of wealth, that of the tithe of her gain, she caused great numbers of large spits of iron to be made, which she sent as an offering to the temple of Apollo at Delphi. And if we may credit certain authors, she amassed such immense treasures as enabled her to build one of the celebrated pyramids of Egypt. So much, by the way, of this famous courtesan, who was fellow servant with Æsop while he lived with Jadmon; to show how these two persons, born in a servile condition, arrived by very different methods to a more splendid fortune: the one by his merit and the beauties of his mind, the other by the infamous traffic of her personal charms.

For the rest, it is certain that it was Jadmon who gave

Æsop his liberty; whether as a reward for his faithful services, or that he was ashamed to keep longer in servitude a person whose superior qualities rendered him more worthy to command, may be difficult to determine: but the fact is to be proved, by the express testimony of the scholiast of Aristophanes, on the comedy of the Birds, as well as by the authority of Herodotus and Plutarch; for it follows by necessary consequence from what they say, as I shall show particularly when I come to speak of the death of Æsop. Planudes therefore deserves no credit, when he affirms that Xanthus was the last master of Æsop, and the person who gave him his liberty. Very little also must be believed of what he relates concerning Æsop while he was in the service of Xanthus, as he makes him say and do so many impertinent and ridiculous things, that none can receive them for true, without imagining Æsop an idle buffoon, rather than a serious philosopher. And in fine, since nothing of this ridiculous stuff is to be found in ancient writers, I think one may with justice affirm, that they are no better than idle tales, and mere fooleries.

CHAPTER V.

OF HIS ADVANCEMENT TO THE COURT OF CRÆSUS,
KING OF LYDIA, AND OF HIS MEETING THE
SEVEN SAGES THERE.

Whatever may be doubtful in the life of Æsop, there is nothing more certain than that after recovering his liberty, he soon acquired a very great reputation amongst the Greeks, being held in almost equal estimation with any of the seven sages who flourished at this time, that is, the fifty-second olympiad. The fame of his wisdom reaching the ears of Cræsus, that monarch sent for him to his court, admitted him to his friendship, and so obliged him by his favors that he engaged himself in his service to the end of his days. His residence in the court of this mighty king rendered him more polite than most of the other philosophers of his time; more complaisant to the humors of princes, and more reconciled to monarchical government, of which he gave evident proofs on divers occasions. For instance, when Cræsus had prevailed with the seven sages to meet in his capital city of Sardis, after having shown them the magnificence of his court, and his vast riches, he asked them, Whom they thought the happiest man of all they had known? Some named one person, and some another; Solon, in particular, gave this praise to Tellus, an Athenian, and also to Cleobis and Biton, Argians; concluding, that no one could be pronounced happy before his death. Æsop, perceiving the king was not well satisfied with any of their answers, spoke in his turn, and said: For my part, I am persuaded that Cræsus hath as much pre-eminence in happiness

over all other men, as the sea hath over all the rivers. The king was so pleased with this judgment, that he eagerly pronounced that sentence, which has continued ever since a common proverb—"The Phrygian has hit the mark." When Solon, therefore, took leave of Cræsus, who dismissed him very coolly, Æsop being sorry that Solon had spoken to the king with so little complaisance, said to him, as he accompanied him part of the way, O Solon, either we must not speak to kings, or we must say what pleases them. On the contrary, answered Solon, we must either not speak to kings at all, or we must give them good and useful advice. Another time, as Æsop was traveling over Greece, either to satisfy his curiosity, or about the particular affairs of Cræsus, it happened that he passed through Athens, just after Pisistratus had usurped the sovereign power, and abolished the popular state; seeing that the Athenians bore the yoke very impatiently, longing to recover their liberty, and to rid themselves of Pisistratus, though his government was easy and moderate, Æsop related to them the fable of the frogs that entreated Jupiter to give them a king, exhorting them to submit cheerfully to so good a prince as Pisistratus, lest in changing they should fall under the power of some mischievous and cruel tyrant.

CHAPTER VI.

SOME DETACHED PARTICULARS OF HIS LIFE, AND THE
IMPROBABILITY OF PLANUDES' ACCOUNT OF HIS
TRAVELS INTO EGYPT AND BABYLON.

There are not many other particulars found concerning Æsop, in authors worthy of credit; except it be that he once again met with the seven sages of Greece, in the court of Periander, king of Corinth. However, I dare not affirm whether it was here, or in some other place, that, falling into discourse with Chilon, who had asked him, What God was doing? He answered, that he was humbling high things, and exalting low. Some also relate, that to show how the life of man abounds with misery, and that one pleasure is accompanied with a thousand pains, Æsop was wont to say, that Prometheus having taken earth to form a man, had tempered and moistened it, not with water, but with tears.

I reject as pure falsehood and invention, all that Planudes writes of Æsop's travels into Egypt and Babylon, because he intermixes stories altogether incredible, and adds to them certain circumstances, which are repugnant to the truth of history, or which wholly overturn the order of time. I shall content myself with alleging two signal falsities, on which he builds all the rest of his narration. He says that the king who reigned in Babylon when Æsop went thither, was called Lycerus. But who has ever read or heard of such a king? Let the catalogue of all the kings of Babylon, from Nabonasser to Alexander the Great, be examined, and you shall not find one amongst

them whose name is at all like Lycerus. On the other hand, by the exactest chronology it will appear, that in Æsop's time there could be no other king in Babylon, but Nebuchadnezzar, and his father, Nebopolasser; since Nebopolasser reigned one-and-twenty years, and Nebuchadnezzar forty-three, who died the same year with Æsop, being the first of the fifty-fourth olympiad. Neither is it more possible to believe, that Æsop went into Egypt in the time of king Nectanebus, as Planudes asserts, since this king did not begin to reign till two hundred years after the death of Æsop: that is to say, in the hundred and fourth olympiad. And one need not be very learned in chronology, to be certain, that Æsop lived partly under the reign of Apries, and partly under that of his successor Amasis, kings of Egypt.

CHAPTER VII.

OF HIS DEATH.

What Planudes relates about the death of Æsop, comes nearer to the truth than anything which he has written concerning his life. However, it is still safer to rely on what ancient authors have said on the subject, and they record it thus. Æsop, being sent by Cræsus to the city of Delphi, with a large sum of gold, in order to offer magnificent sacrifices to Apollo, and to distribute to each citizen four minæ of silver; it happened that differences arose between him and the townsmen to such a degree, that he spoke of them in very provoking terms. Among other things, he reproached them with having hardly any arable land, and that were it not for the great concourse of strangers, and the frequent sacrifices that were offered in their temple, they would soon be reduced to die of hunger. Not satisfied with offending them in words, he proceeded to deeds; having performed the sacrifices in the manner that Cræsus had ordered, he sent back the rest of the money to the city of Sardis, as judging the Delphians unworthy to partake of the king's liberality. This irritated them against him to such a degree, that they consulted how they might be revenged on him, and conspired by a notorious villainy to take away his life. They hid amongst his baggage one of the golden vessels consecrated to Apollo; and as Æsop departed toward Phocis, they sent immediate messengers after him, who, searching his baggage, found the vessel which they themselves had there deposited. On this, they presently drag

him to prison, accuse him of sacrilege, and sentence him to be precipitated from the rock Hyampia, which was the punishment commonly inflicted on sacrilegious persons. As they were on the point of throwing him off, in order to deter them from so execrable an act by the apprehension of divine justice, which suffers no wickedness to go unpunished, he told them the fable of the eagle and the beetle. But the Delphians, paying no regard to his fable, pushed him down the precipice. It is recorded, however, that their land was rendered barren, and that they were afflicted with many strange distempers, for several years afterwards. In this distress they consulted the oracle, and were answered, that all their miseries were owing to the unjust condemnation and death of Æsop. On this, they caused it to be proclaimed by sound of trumpet, at all the public feasts and general meetings of the Greeks, that if there were any of the kindred of Æsop, who would demand satisfaction for his death, he was desired to come and exact it of them, in what manner he pleased. But no one was found that pretended any right in this affair, till the third generation; when a Samian presented himself, named Jadmon, grandson of that Jadmon, who had been master to Æsop in the island of Samos; and the Delphians having made him some satisfaction, were delivered from their calamities. It is said, that after this time, they transferred the punishment of sacrilegious persons from the rock Hyampia to that of Nauplia. From hence it appears, as I hinted above, to be the opinion of Herodotus and Plutarch, that Jadmon was the last master of Æsop, and he that set him free, because otherwise, neither he nor any of his descendants could have any interest in his death, nor pretend to any right of seeking reparation, or receiving satisfaction.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF THE HONORS DONE HIM AFTER HIS DEATH.

And now I will readily agree with Planudes, that Æsop was regretted by the greatest and wisest men of Greece, who testified to the Delphians how much they resented his death. But I add, that the Athenians, in particular, had Æsop in so much honor, that they erected for him a magnificent statue in their city; regarding more the greatness of his personal merit, than the meanness of his race and condition. I further say, that the opinion which all the world had conceived of his wisdom and probity, encouraged the poets to make the people believe that the gods had raised him again to life, as they had done Tyndarus, Hercules, Glaucus, and Hypolitus. Nay, some have not scrupled to affirm, that he lived many years after his resurrection, and fought twice on the side of the Greeks against the Persians, in the straits of Thermopylæ, which must have been above eighty years after his death. But these are such manifest absurdities, as confute themselves. Neither is it probable, as some have asserted, that he wrote two books concerning what happened to him in the city of Delphi, unless it be supposed that he made two voyages thither, and wrote of the first: for in the last, it is very improbable he should have any time for such a work; neither can it be grounded on the testimony of any author worthy of credit. It is indeed most probable, that he left nothing in writing but his fables, which, either for the elegance of the narration, or the usefulness of their morality, have always been so much esteemed, that many

of them have preserved themselves in the memories of men for above two thousand years. Yet I do not assert that those which Planudes has published are the very fables which Æsop wrote, as Planudes has given us too many occasions to doubt of his sincerity; and also, as he has omitted in his collection many fables, which ancient authors have attributed to Æsop. If we could be certain that it is the genuine work of Æsop, we must doubtless confess, that we have no writings in prose more ancient, except the books of Moses, and some others of the Old Testament.

AN ESSAY ON FABLE.

I.

INTRODUCTION.

Whoever undertakes to compose a fable, whether of the sublimer and more complex kind, as the epic and dramatic; or of the lower and more simple, as what has been called the *Æsopian*; must first endeavor to illustrate some one moral or prudential maxim. * To this point the composition in all its parts must be directed; and this will lead him to describe some action proper to enforce the maxim he has chosen. In several respects, therefore, the greater fable and the less agree. It is the business of both to teach some particular moral, exemplified by an action, and this enlivened by natural incidents. Both alike must be supported by apposite and proper characters, and both be furnished with sentiments and language suitable to the characters thus employed. I would by no means, however, infer, that, to produce one of these small pieces requires the same degree of genius, as to form an epic or dramatic Fable. All I would insinuate, is, that the apologue has a right to some share of our esteem, from the relation it bears to the poems before mentioned: as it is honorable to spring from a noble stem, although in ever so remote a branch. A perfect fable, even of this inferior kind, seems a much stronger proof of genius than the mere narrative of an event. The latter indeed requires judgment: the former, together with judgment, demands an effort of the imagination.

Having thus endeavored to procure these little compositions as much regard as they may fairly claim, I proceed to treat of some particulars most essential to their character.

* * *

II.

ON THE TRUTH OR MORAL OF A FABLE.

It is the very essence of a Fable to convey some Moral or useful Truth, beneath the shadow of an allegory. It is this chiefly that distinguishes a Fable from a Tale, and indeed gives it the pre-eminence in point of use and dignity. A tale may consist of an event either serious or comic; and, provided it be told agreeably, may be excellent in its kind, though it should imply no sort of Moral. But the action of a Fable is contrived on purpose to teach and to imprint some Truth; and should clearly and obviously include the illustration of it, in the very catastrophe.

The Truth to be preferred on this occasion should neither be too obvious, nor trite, nor trivial. Such would ill deserve the pains employed in Fable to convey it. As little also should it be one that is very dubious, dark, or controverted. It should be of such a nature as to challenge the assent of every ingenuous and sober judgment; never a point of mere speculation; but tending to inform or to remind the reader of the proper means that lead to happiness.

The reason why fable has been so much esteemed in all ages and in all countries, is perhaps owing to the polite manner in which its maxims are conveyed. The very ar-

ticle of giving instruction supposes at least a superiority of wisdom in the adviser; a circumstance by no means favorable to the ready admission of advice. It is the peculiar excellence of Fable to wave this air of superiority: it leaves the reader to collect the moral; who, by thus discovering more than is shown him, finds his principle of self-love gratified, instead of being disgusted. The attention is either taken off from the adviser; or, if otherwise, we are at least flattered by his humility and address.

Besides, instruction, as conveyed by Fable, does not only lay aside its lofty mien and supercilious aspect, but appears dressed in all the smiles and graces which can strike the imagination, or engage the passions. It pleases in order to convince; and it imprints its moral so much the deeper, in proportion as it entertains; so that we may be said to feel our duties at the very instant that we comprehend them.

I am very sensible with what difficulty a Fable is brought to a strict agreement with the foregoing account of it. This, however, ought to be the writer's aim. It is the simple manner in which the *Morals of Æsop* are interwoven with his Fables, that distinguishes, and gives him the preference to all other mythologists. His mountain delivered of a mouse, produces the Moral of his Fable, in ridicule of pompous pretenders; and his crow, when she drops her cheese, lets fall, as it were by accident, the strongest admonition against the power of flattery. There is no need of a separate sentence to explain it; no possibility of impressing it deeper, by that load we too often see of accumulated reflections. Indeed the Fable of the Cock and the precious stone is in this respect very exceptionable. The lesson it inculcates is so dark and ambiguous, that different expositors have given it quite opposite interpretations; some imputing the cock's

rejection of the diamond to his wisdom, and others to his ignorance.

Strictly speaking then, one should render needless any detached or explicit moral. Æsop, the father of this kind of writing, disclaimed any such assistance. It is the province of Fable to give it birth in the mind of the person for whom it is intended; otherwise the precept is direct and obvious, contrary to the nature and end of allegory.

After all, the greatest fault in any composition (for I can hardly allow that name to riddles) is obscurity. There can be no purpose answered by a work that is unintelligible. Annibal Carracci and Raphael himself, rather than risk so unpardonable a fault, have admitted verbal explanations into some of their best pictures. It must be confessed, that every story is not capable of telling its own Moral. In a case of this nature, and this only, it should be expressly introduced. Perhaps also, where the point is doubtful, we ought to show enough for the less acute, even at the hazard of showing too much for the more sagacious; who, for this very reason, that they are more sagacious, will pardon a superfluity which is such to them alone.

But on these occasions, it has been matter of dispute, whether the moral is better introduced at the end or beginning of a Fable. Æsop, as I said before, universally rejected any separate Moral. Those we now find at the opening of his Fables, were placed there by other hands. Among the ancients, Phædrus; and Gay, among the moderns, inserted theirs at the beginning; La Motte prefers them at the conclusion; and Fontaine disposes of them indiscriminately, at the beginning or end, as he feels convenient. If, amidst the authority of such great names,

I might venture to mention my own opinion, I should rather prefix them as an introduction, than add them as an appendage. For I would neither pay my reader nor myself so bad a compliment, as to suppose, after he had read the Fable, that he was not able to discover its meaning. Besides, when the Moral of a Fable is not very prominent and striking, a leading thought at the beginning puts the reader in a proper track. He knows the game which he pursues: and, like a beagle on a warm scent, he follows the sport with alacrity, in proportion to his intelligence. On the other hand, if he have no previous intimation of the design, he is puzzled throughout the Fable; and cannot determine upon its merit without the trouble of a fresh perusal. A ray of light, imparted at first, may show him the tendency and propriety of every expression as he goes along; but while he travels in the dark no wonder if he stumble or mistake his way.



III.

OF THE ACTION AND INCIDENTS PROPER FOR A FABLE.

In choosing the action or allegory, three conditions are altogether expedient. I. It must be clear: that is, it ought to show without equivocation, precisely and obviously, what we intend should be understood. II. It must be one and entire. That is, it must not be composed of separate and independent actions, but must tend in all its circumstances to the completion of one single event. III. It must be natural; that is, founded, if not on Truth, at least on probability; on popular opinion; on that rela-

tion and analogy which things bear to one another, when we have gratuitously endowed them with the human faculties of speech and reason. And these conditions are taken from the nature of the human mind; which cannot endure to be embarrassed, to be bewildered, or to be deceived.

A Fable offends against perspicuity, when it leaves us doubtful what Truth the Fabulist intended to convey. We have a striking example of this in Dr. Croxall's Fable of the creaking wheel. A coachman, says he, hearing one of his wheels creak, was surprised; but more especially, when he perceived that it was the worst wheel of the whole set, and which he thought had but little pretence to take such a liberty. But, upon his demanding the reason why it did so, the wheel replied, that it was natural for people who labored under any affliction or calamity to complain. Who would imagine this Fable designed, as the author informs us, for an admonition to repress, or keep our complaints to ourselves; or if we must let our sorrows speak, to take care it be done in solitude and retirement. The story of this Fable is not well imagined; at least if meant to support the moral which the author has drawn from it.

A Fable is faulty in respect to unity, when the several circumstances point different ways; and do not center, like so many lines, in one distinct and unambiguous moral. An example of this kind is furnished by La Motte in the observation he makes upon Fontaine's two pigeons. These pigeons had a reciprocal affection for each other. One of them showing a desire to travel, was earnestly opposed by his companion, but in vain. The former sets out upon his rambles, and encounters a thousand unforeseen dangers; while the latter suffers near as much at home, through his apprehensions for his roving

friend. However, our traveler, after many hairbreadth escapes, returns at length in safety, and the two pigeons are, once again, mutually happy in each other's company. Now the application of this Fable is utterly vague and uncertain, for want of circumstances to determine whether the author designed principally to represent the dangers of the Traveler; his friend's anxiety during his absence; or their mutual happiness on his return. Whereas had the traveling pigeon met with no disasters on his way, but only found all pleasures insipid for want of his friend's participation; and had he returned from no other motive than a desire of seeing him again, the whole then had happily closed in this one conspicuous inference, that the presence of a real friend is the most desirable of all gratifications.

The last rule I have mentioned, that a Fable should be natural, may be violated several ways. It is opposed, when we make creatures enter into unnatural associations. Thus the sheep or the goat must not be made to hunt with the lion; and it is yet more absurd, to represent the lion as falling in love with the forester's daughter. It is infringed, by ascribing to them appetites and passions that are not consistent with their known characters; or else by employing them in such occupations, as are foreign and unsuitable to their respective natures. A fox should not be said to long for grapes; a hedge-hog pretend to drive away flies; nor a partridge offer his service to delve in the vineyard. A ponderous iron and an earthen vase should not swim together down a river; and he that should make his goose lay golden eggs, would show a luxuriant fancy, but very little judgment. In short, nothing besides the faculty of speech and reason, which fable has been allowed to confer even upon inanimates, must ever contradict the nature of things.

Opinions indeed, although erroneous, if they either are, or have been universally received, may afford sufficient foundation for a Fable. The mandrake, here, may be made to utter groans and the dying swan to pour forth her elegy. The sphinx and the hœnix, the siren and the centaur, have all the existence that is requisite for fable. Nay, the goblin, the fairy, and even the man in the moon, may have each his province allotted to him, so it be not an improper one. Here the notoriety of opinion supplies the place of fact, and in this manner truth may fairly be deduced from falsehood.

Concerning the incidents proper for Fable, it is a rule without exception, that they ought always to be few; it being foreign to the nature of this composition, to admit of much variety. Yet a Fable with only one single incident, may possibly appear too naked. If Æsop and Phædrus are herein sometimes too sparing, Fontaine and La Motte are as often too profuse. In this, as in most other matters, a medium certainly is best. In a word, the incidents should not only be few but short; and like those in the Fables of "the swallow and other birds," "the miller and his son," and "the court and country mouse," they must naturally arise out of the subject, and serve to illustrate and enforce the Moral.

IV.

OF THE PERSONS, CHARACTERS, AND SENTIMENTS
OF FABLE.

The race of animals first present themselves, as the proper actors in this little drama. They are indeed a species that approaches, in many respects, so near to our own, that we need only lend them speech, in order to produce a striking resemblance. It would, however, be unreasonable to expect a strict and universal similitude. There is a certain measure and degree of analogy, with which the most discerning reader will rest contented: for instance, he will accept the properties of animals, although necessary and invariable, as the images of our inclinations, though never so free. To require more than this, were to sap the very foundations of allegory; and even to deprive ourselves of half the pleasure that flows from poetry in general.

Solomon sends us to the ant, to learn the wisdom of industry: and our inimitable ethic poet introduces nature herself as giving us a familiar kind of counsel.

Thus then to Man the voice of Nature spake:
"Go, from the Creatures thy instructions take—
"There all the forms of social union find,
"And thence, let reason late instruct mankind."

He supposes that animals in their native characters, without the advantages of speech and reason which are assigned them by the Fabulists, may in regard to Morals as well as Arts, become examples to the human race. Indeed, I am afraid we have so far deviated into fictitious appetites and fantastic manners, as to find the expediency of copying from them, that simplicity we ourselves have

lost. If animals, in themselves may be thus exemplary, how much more may they be made instructive, under the direction of an able Fabulist; who by conferring upon them the gift of language, contrives to make their instincts more intelligible and their examples more determinate!

But these are not his only actors. The Fabulist has one advantage above all other writers whatsoever; as all the works both of art and nature are more immediately at his disposal. He has, in this respect, a liberty not allowed to epic, or dramatic writers; who are undoubtedly more limited in the choice of persons to be employed. He has authority to press into his service, every kind of existence under heaven: not only beasts, birds, insects, and all the animal creation; but flowers, shrubs, trees and all the tribe of vegetables. Even mountains, fossils, minerals, and the inanimate works of nature discourse articulately at his command, and act the part which he assigns them. The virtues, vices, and every property of beings, receive from him a local habitation and a name. In short he may personify, bestow life, speech and action on whatever he thinks proper.

It is easy to imagine what a source of novelty and variety this must open, to a genius capable of conceiving, and of employing, these ideal persons in a proper manner: what an opportunity it affords him to diversify his images, and to treat the fancy with change of objects; while he strengthens the understanding, or regulates the passions, by a succession of Truths. To raise beings like these into a state of action and intelligence, gives the Fabulist an undoubted claim to that first character of the poet, a Creator. I rank him not, as I said before, with the writers of epic or dramatic poems; but the maker of pins or needles is as much an artist, as an anchor-smith: and a painter in miniature may

show as much skill, as he who paints in the largest proportions.

When these persons are once raised, we must carefully enjoin them proper tasks; and assign them sentiments and language suitable to their several natures, and respective properties.

A raven should not be extolled for her voice, nor a bear be represented with an elegant shape. It were a very obvious instance of absurdity, to paint a hare, cruel; or a wolf, compassionate. An ass were but ill qualified to be General of an army, though he may well enough serve perhaps for one of the trumpeters. But so long as popular opinion allows to the lion, magnanimity; rage, to the tiger; strength, to the mule; cunning, to the fox; and buffoonery, to the monkey; why may not they support the characters of an Agamemnon, Achilles, Ajax, Ulysses and Thersites? The truth is, when Moral actions are with judgment attributed to the brute creation, we scarce perceive that nature is at all violated by the Fabulist. He appears, at most, to have only translated their language. His lions, wolves, and foxes, behave and argue as those creatures would, had they originally been endowed with the human faculties of speech and reason.

But greater art is yet required, whenever we personify inanimate beings. Here the copy so far deviates from the great lines of nature, that without the nicest care, reason will revolt against the fiction. However, beings of this sort, managed ingeniously and with address, recommend the Fabulist's invention by the grace of novelty and of variety. Indeed the analogy between things natural and artificial, animal and inanimate, is often so very striking, that we can, with seeming propriety, give passions and sentiments to every individual part of existence. Ap-

pearance favors the deception. The vine may be enamored of the elm; her embraces testify her passion. The swelling mountain may, naturally enough, be delivered of a mouse. The gourd may reproach the pine, and the sky-rocket, insult the stars. The axe may solicit a new handle of the forest; and the moon, in her female character, request a fashionable garment. Here is nothing incongruous; nothing that shocks the reader with impropriety. On the other hand, were the axe to desire a perriwig, and the moon petition for a pair of new boots; probability would then be violated, and the absurdity become too glaring.



V.

ON THE LANGUAGE OF FABLE.

The most beautiful fables that ever were invented, may be disfigured by the language in which they are clothed. Of this, poor *Æsop*, in some of his English dresses, affords a melancholy proof. The ordinary style of Fable should be familiar, but also elegant. Were I to instance any style that I should prefer on this occasion, it should be that of Mr. Addison's little tales in the *Spectator*. That ease and simplicity, that conciseness and propriety, that subdued and decent humor he so remarkably discovers there; seem to have qualified him for a Fabulist, almost beyond any other writer. But to return.

The Familiar, says Mr. LaMotte, to whose ingenious essay I have often been obliged in this discourse, is the general tone, or accent of fable. It was thought sufficient, on its first appearance, to lend the animals our

most common language. Nor indeed have they any extraordinary pretensions to the sublime; it being requisite they should speak with the same simplicity that they behave.

The familiar also is more proper for insinuation, than the elevated; this being the language of reflection, as the former is the voice of sentiment. We guard ourselves against the one, but lie open to the other; and instruction will always the most effectually sway us, when it appears least jealous of its rights and privileges.

The familiar style however that is here required, notwithstanding that appearance of ease which is its character, is perhaps more difficult to write, than the more elevated or sublime. A writer more readily perceives when he has risen above the common language; than he perceives, in speaking that language, whether he has made the choice that is most suitable to the occasion; and it is, nevertheless, upon this happy choice depends all the charm of the familiar. Moreover, the elevated style deceives and seduces, although it be not the best chosen; whereas the familiar can procure itself no sort of respect, if it be not easy, natural, just, delicate, and unaffected. A Fabulist must therefore bestow great attention upon his style: and even labor it so much the more, that it may appear to have cost him no pains at all.

The authority of Fontaine justifies these opinions in regard to style. His fables are perhaps the best examples of the genteel familiar, as Sir Roger L'Estrange affords the grossest, of the indelicate and low. This may be familiar, but is also coarse and vulgar; and cannot fail to disgust a reader that has the least degree of taste or delicacy.

The style of Fable then must be simple and familiar; and it must likewise be correct and elegant. By the former, I would advise that it should not be loaded with figure and metaphor; that the disposition of words be natural; the turn of sentences, easy; and their construction, unembarrassed. By elegance, I would exclude all coarse and provincial terms; all affected and puerile conceits; all obsolete and pedantic phrases. To this I would adjoin, as the word perhaps implies, a certain finishing polish, which gives a grace and spirit to the whole; and which though it has always the appearance of nature is almost ever the effect of art.

But, notwithstanding all that has been said, there are some occasions on which it is allowable, and even expedient, to change the style. The language of a Fable must rise or fall in conformity to the subject. A lion, when introduced in his regal capacity, must hold discourse in a strain somewhat more elevated than a Country-Mouse. The lioness then becomes his Queen, and the beasts of the forest are called his subjects; a method that offers at once to the imagination, both the animal and the person he is designed to represent. Again, the buffoon-monkey should avoid that pomp of phrase, which the owl employs as her best pretense to wisdom. Unless the style be thus judiciously varied, it will be impossible to preserve a just distinction of character.

Descriptions, at once concise and pertinent, add a grace to Fable; but are then most happy, when included in the action, whereof the Fable of Boreas and the sun affords us an example. An epithet well chosen is often a description in itself, and so much the more agreeable, as it the less retards us, in our pursuit of the catastrophe.

I might enlarge much further on the subject, but perhaps I may appear to have been too diffuse already. Let

it suffice to hint, that little strokes of humor, when arising naturally from the subject, and incidental reflections, when kept in due subordination to the principal, add a value to these compositions. These latter however should be employed very sparingly, and with great address. It is scarcely enough that they naturally spring out of the subject; they should be such as to appear necessary and essential parts of the Fable. And when these embellishments, pleasing in themselves, tend to illustrate the main action, they then afford that nameless grace remarkable in Fontaine and some few others, and which persons of the best discernment will more easily conceive, than they can explain.

R. DODSLEY.



ÆSOP'S FABLES.

The most worthless persons are generally the most presuming.

THE TREES AND THE BRAMBLE.

The Israelites, ever murmuring and discontented under the reign of Jehovah, were desirous of having a king, like the rest of the nations. They offered the kingdom to Gideon, their deliverer; to him, and to his posterity after him: he generously refused their offer, and reminded them that Jehovah was their king. When Gideon was dead, Abimelech, his son by a concubine, slew all his other sons to the number of seventy, Joatham alone escaping; and by the assistance of the Shechemites made himself king. Joatham, to represent to them their folly, and to show them that the most deserving are generally the least ambitious, whereas the worthless grasp at power with eagerness, and exercise it with insolence and tyranny, spake to them in the following manner:

Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, so may God hearken unto you. The Trees, grown weary of the state of freedom and equality in which God had placed them, met together to choose and to anoint a king over them: and they said to the Olive-tree, Reign thou over us. But the Olive-tree said unto them, Shall I quit my fatness wherewith God and man is honored, to disquiet myself with the cares of government, and rule over the Trees? And they said unto the Fig-tree, Come thou,

and reign over us. But the Fig-tree said unto them, Shall I bid adieu to my sweetness and my pleasant fruit, to take upon me the painful charge of royalty, and to be set over the Trees? Then said the Trees unto the Vine, Come thou and reign over us. But the Vine said also unto them, Shall I leave my wine, which honoreth God and cheereth man, to bring upon myself nothing but trouble and anxiety, and to become king of the Trees? We are happy in our present lot: seek some other to reign over you. Then said all the Trees unto the Bramble, Come thou and reign over us. And the Bramble said unto them, I will be your king; come ye all under my shadow, and be safe; obey me, and I will grant you my protection. But if you obey me not, out of the Bramble shall come forth a fire, which shall devour even the cedars of Lebanon.



It is better to bear with some defects in a mild and gentle government, than to risk the greater evils of tyranny and oppression.

THE FROGS PETITIONING JUPITER FOR A KING.

As Æsop was traveling over Greece, he happened to pass through Athens just after Pisistratus had abolished the popular state, and usurped a sovereign power; when, perceiving that the Athenians bore the yoke, though mild and easy, with much impatience, he related to them the following fable:

The commonwealth of Frogs, a discontented, variable race, weary of liberty, and fond of change, petitioned

Jupiter to grant them a king. The good-natured deity, in order to indulge this their request, with as little mischief to the petitioners as possible, threw them down a



Log. At first they regarded their new monarch with great reverence, and kept from him at a most respectful distance: but perceiving his tame and peaceable disposi-

tion, they by degrees ventured to approach him with more familiarity, till at length they conceived for him



the utmost contempt. In this disposition, they renewed their request to Jupiter, and entreated him to bestow upon them another king. The Thunderer in his wrath

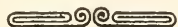
sent them a Crane, who no sooner took possession of his new dominions, than he began to devour his subjects one after another in a most capricious and tyrannical manner. They were now far more dissatisfied than before; when applying to Jupiter a third time, they were dismissed with being told that the evil they complained of they had imprudently brought upon themselves; and that they had no other remedy now but to submit to it with patience.



We severely censure that in others, which we ourselves practice without scruple.

THE WOLF AND THE SHEPHERDS.

A Wolf, says Plutarch, peeping into a hut, where a company of Shepherds were regaling themselves with a joint of mutton; Lord, said he, what a clamor would these men have raised if they had caught me at such a banquet!



The folly of wishing to withhold our part from the support of civil government.

THE BELLY AND THE MEMBERS.

Menenius Agrippa, a Roman consul, being deputed by the senate to appease a dangerous tumult and sedition of the people, who refused to pay the taxes necessary for carrying on the business of the state, convinced them of their folly by delivering to them the following fable:

My friends and countrymen, said he, attend to my words. It once happened that the members of the human body, taking some exception at the conduct of the Belly, resolved no longer to grant him the usual supplies. The Tongue first, in a seditious speech, aggravated their grievances; and after highly extolling the activity and diligence of the Hands and Feet, set forth how hard and unreasonable it was, that the fruits of their



labor should be squandered away upon the insatiable cravings of a fat and indolent paunch, which was entirely useless, and unable to do anything towards helping himself. This speech was received with unanimous applause by all the members. Immediately the Hands declared they would work no more; the Feet determined to carry no farther the load with which they had hith-

erto been oppressed; nay, the very Teeth refused to prepare a single morsel more for his use. In this distress the Belly besought them to consider maturely, and not foment so senseless a rebellion. There is none of you, says he, but may be sensible that whatsoever you bestow upon me is immediately converted to your use, and dispersed by me for the good of you all into every limb. But he remonstrated in vain; for during the clamors of passion the voice of reason is always disregarded. It being therefore impossible for him to quiet the tumult, he was starved for want of their assistance, and the body wasted away to a skeleton. The Limbs, grown weak and languid, were sensible at last of their error, and would fain have returned to their respective duty, but it was now too late; death had taken possession of the whole, and they all perished together.



We should well consider, whether the removal of a present evil does not tend to produce a greater.

THE FOX AND THE HEDGEHOG.

Aristotle informs us that the following fable was spoken by Æsop to the Samians, on a debate upon changing their ministers, who were accused of plundering the commonwealth:

A Fox swimming across a river, happened to be entangled in some weeds that grew near the shore, from which he was unable to extricate himself. As he lay thus exposed to whole swarms of flies, who were galling him and sucking his blood, a Hedgehog, observing his dis-

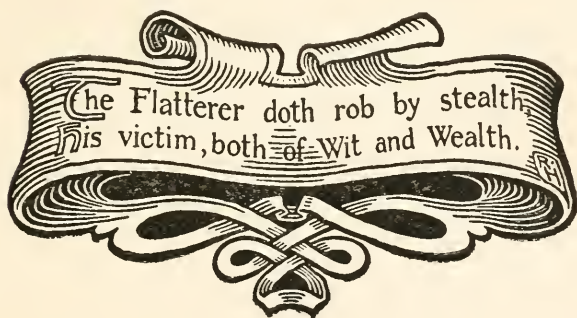
tress, kindly offered to drive them away. By no means, said the Fox; for if these should be chased away, who are already sufficiently gorged, another more hungry swarm would succeed, and I should be robbed of every remaining drop of blood in my veins.



Wherever flattery gains admission, it seems to banish
common sense.

THE FOX AND THE RAVEN.

A Fox observing a Raven perched on the branch of a tree, with a fine piece of cheese in her mouth, immediately began to consider how he might possess himself of so delicious a morsel. Dear madam, said he, I am extremely glad to have the pleasure of seeing you this morning: your beautiful shape, and shining feathers are the delight of my eyes; and would you condescend to favor me with a song? I doubt not but your voice is equal to the rest of your accomplishments. Deluded with this flattering speech, the transported Raven opened her mouth, in order to give him a specimen of her pipe, when down dropped the cheese: which the Fox immediately snatching up, bore away in triumph, leaving the Raven to lament her credulous vanity at her leisure.

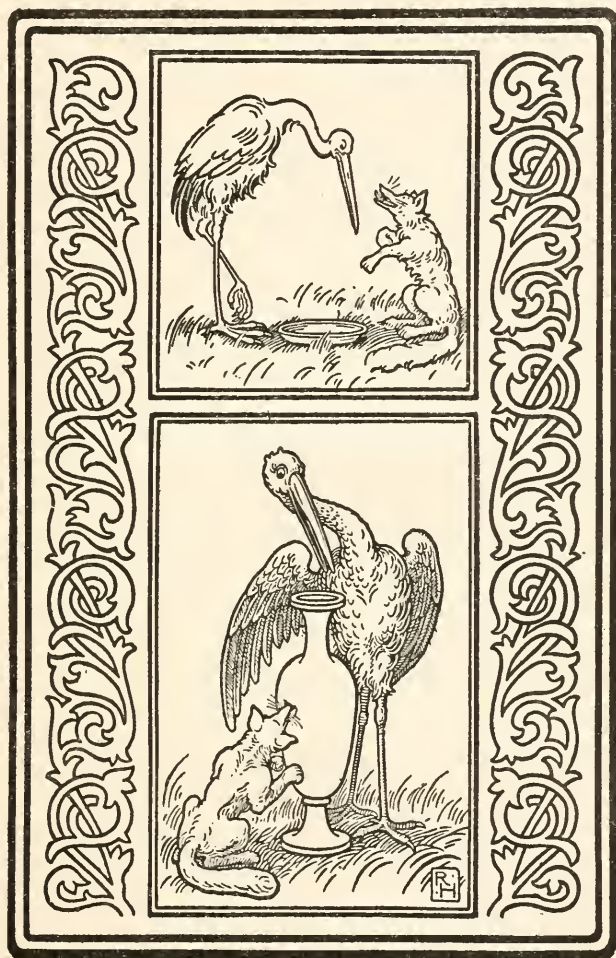


We should always reflect, before we rally another, whether we can bear to have the jest retorted.

THE FOX AND THE STORK.

The Fox, though in general more inclined to roguery than wit, had once a strong inclination to play the wag with his neighbor, the Stork. He accordingly invited her to dinner in great form; but when it came upon the table, the Stork found it consisted entirely of different soups, served up in broad shallow dishes, so that she could only dip in the end of her bill, but could not possibly satisfy her hunger. The Fox lapped it up very readily, and every now and then, addressing himself to his guest, desired to know how she liked her entertainment; hoped that everything was seasoned to her taste; and protested he was very sorry to see her eat so sparingly. The Stork, perceiving she was played upon, took no notice, but pretended to like every dish extremely; and at parting pressed the Fox so earnestly to return her visit, that he could not in civility refuse. When the day arrived, he repaired to his appointment; but to his great mortification, when dinner appeared, he found it composed of minced meat, served up in long narrow-necked glasses; so that he was only tantalized with the sight of what it was impossible for him to taste. The Stork thrust in her long bill, and helped herself very plentifully; then turning to Reynard, who was eagerly licking the outside of a jar where some sauce had been spilled—I am very glad, said she, smiling, that you seem to have so good an appetite; I hope you will make as hearty a dinner at my table as I did the other day at yours. Reynard hung down his head, and looked very

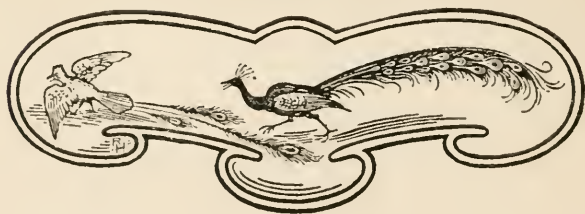
much displeased. Nay, nay, said the Stork, don't pretend to be out of humor about the matter: they that cannot take a jest, should never make one.



To aim at figure by the means either of borrowed wit,
or borrowed money, generally subjects us at
last to tenfold ridicule.

THE DAW WITH BORROWED FEATHERS.

A pragmatistical Jackdaw was vain enough to imagine that he wanted nothing but the dress to render him as elegant a bird as the Peacock. Puffed up with this wise conceit, he plumed himself with a sufficient quantity of their most beautiful feathers, and in this borrowed garb, forsaking his old companions, endeavored to pass for a Peacock. But he no sooner attempted to associate with these genteel creatures than an affected strut betrayed the vain pretender. The offended Peacocks, plucking from him their degraded feathers, soon stripped him of his gentility, reduced him to a mere Jackdaw, and drove him back to his brethren; by whom he was now equally despised, and justly punished with general derision and contempt.



Those who do not feel the sentiments of humanity, will seldom listen to the pleas of reason.

THE WOLF AND THE LAMB

A Wolf and a Lamb were accidentally quenching their thirst together at the same rivulet. The Wolf stood towards the head of the stream, and the Lamb at some distance below. The injurious beast, resolved on a quarrel, fiercely demands, How dare you disturb the water

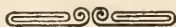


which I am drinking? The poor Lamb, all trembling, replies, How, I beseech you, can that possibly be the case, since the current sets from you to me? Disconcerted by the force of truth, he changes the accusation. Six months ago, says he, you vilely slandered me. Impossible, returns the Lamb, for I was not then born. No matter; it was your father then, or some of your relations; and immediately seizing the innocent lamb, he tore him to pieces.

It is unjust and cruel to raise ourselves mirth at the expense of another's peace and happiness.

THE BOYS AND THE FROGS.

On the margin of a large lake, which was inhabited by a great number of Frogs, a company of Boys happened to be at play. Their diversion was duck and drake; and whole volleys of stones were whirled into the water, to the great annoyance and danger of the poor terrified Frogs. At length, one of the most hardy, lifting his head above the surface of the lake; Ah, dear children, said he, why will you learn so soon the cruel practices of your race? Consider, I beseech you, that, though this may be sport to you, it is death to us.



To raise uncommon expectations, renders an ordinary event ridiculous.

THE MOUNTAIN IN LABOR.

A rumor once prevailed that a neighboring Mountain was in labor; it was affirmed that she had been heard to utter prodigious groans; and a general expectation had been raised that some extraordinary birth was at hand. Multitudes flocked with much eagerness to be witnesses of the wonderful event: one expecting her to be delivered of a giant; another of some enormous monster; and all were suspended in earnest expectation of somewhat grand and astonishing. When, after waiting with great impatience a considerable time, behold! out crept a little ridiculous Mouse.



To rely principally upon our own diligence in matters
that concern ourselves alone.

THE LARK AND HER YOUNG.

A Lark having built her nest in a field of corn, it grew ripe before her young were well able to fly. Apprehensive for their safety, she enjoined them, while she went out in order to provide for their subsistence, to listen very attentively, if they should hear any discourse concerning the reaping of the field. At her return they told her, that the farmer and his son had been there, and had agreed to send to some of their neighbors to assist them in cutting it down the next day. And so they depend, it seems, upon neighbors, said the mother: very well; then I think we have no occasion to be afraid of to-morrow. The next day she went out, and left with them the same injunction as before. When she returned they acquainted her that the farmer and his son had again been there, but as none of their neighbors came to their assistance, they had deferred reaping till the next day, and intended to send for help to their friends and relations. I think we may still venture another day, says the mother; but, however, be careful as before, to let me know what passes in my absence. They now inform her that the farmer and his son had a third time visited the field, and, finding that neither friend nor relation had regarded their summons, they were determined to come the next morning and cut it down themselves. Nay then, replied the Lark, it is time to think of removing: for as they now depend only upon themselves for doing their own business, it will undoubtedly be performed.

An over-greedy disposition often subjects us to the loss of what we already possess.

THE DOG AND THE SHADOW.

A hungry Spaniel, having stolen a piece of flesh from a butcher's shop, was carrying it across a river. The water being clear, and the sun shining brightly, he saw his own image in the stream, and fancied it to be another dog, with a more delicious morsel: upon which, unjustly and greedily opening his jaws to snatch at the shadow, he lost the substance.



The false estimate we often make in preferring our ornamental talents to our useful ones.

THE STAG DRINKING.

A Stag quenching his thirst in a clear lake, was struck with the beauty of his horns, which he saw reflected in the water. At the same time, observing the extreme slenderness of his legs; What a pity it is, said he, that so fine a creature should be furnished with so despicable a set of spindle shanks! What a truly noble animal I should be, were my legs in any degree answerable to my horns! In the midst of this soliloquy, he was alarmed with the cry of a pack of hounds. He immediately flies over the forest, and left his pursuers so far behind that he might probably have escaped; but, taking into a thick wood, his horns were entangled in the branches, where he was held till the hounds came up, and tore him in pieces. In his last moments he

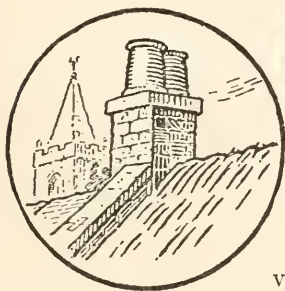
thus exclaimed: How ill do we judge of our own true advantages! The legs which I despised would have borne me away in safety, had not my favorite antlers betrayed me to ruin.



Some will listen to no conviction but what they derive from fatal experience.

THE SWALLOW AND OTHER BIRDS.

A Swallow, observing a farmer employed in sowing hemp, called the little birds together, informed them what he was about, and told them that hemp was the material from which the nets, so fatal to the feathered race, were composed: advising them unanimously to join in picking it up, in order to prevent the consequences. The birds, either disbelieving his information,



or neglecting his advice, gave themselves no trouble about the matter. In a little time the hemp appeared above ground: the friendly Swallow again addressed himself to them, told them it was not yet too late, provided they would immediately set about the work, before the seeds had taken too deep root. But they still rejecting his advice, he forsook their society, repaired for safety to towns and cities, and there built his habitations and kept his residence. One day, as he was skimming along the street, he happened to see a large parcel

of those very birds, imprisoned in a cage, on the shoulders of a bird-catcher. Unhappy wretches, said he, you now feel the punishment of your former neglect. But those, who, having no foresight of their own, despise the wholesome admonitions of their friends, deserve the mischiefs which their own obstinacy or negligence brings upon their heads.



It is the utmost extent of some men's gratitude to refrain from oppressing and injuring their benefactors.

THE WOLF AND THE CRANE.

A Wolf having with too much greediness swallowed a bone, it unfortunately stuck in his throat; and in the violence of his pain he applied to several animals, earnestly entreating them to extract it. None cared to hazard the dangerous experiment, except the Crane, who, persuaded by his solemn promises of a gratuity, ventured to thrust her enormous length of neck down his throat, and successfully performed the operation. When claiming the recompense; See the unreasonableness of some creatures, replied the Wolf: have I not suffered thee safely to draw thy neck out of my jaws, and hast thou the conscience to demand a further reward!



The folly of attempting to recommend ourselves by a behavior foreign to our character.

THE ASS AND THE LAP-DOG.

An Ass who lived in the same family with a favorite Lap-dog, observing the superior degree of affection which the little minion enjoyed, imagined he had nothing more to do, to obtain an equal share in their good graces, than to imitate the Lap-dog's playful and endearing caresses. Accordingly, he began to frisk about before his master, kicking up his heels and braying, in an awkward affectation of wantonness and pleasantry. This strange behavior could not fail of raising much laughter; which the Ass, mistaking for approbation and encouragement, he proceeded to leap upon his master's breast, and began very familiarly to lick his face: but he was presently convinced by the force of a good cudgel, that what is sprightly and agreeable in one, may in another be justly censured as rude and impertinent; and that the surest way to gain esteem is for every one to act suitably to his own natural genius and character.

We may all need the assistance of our inferiors; and should by no means consider the meanest among them as wholly incapable of returning an obligation

THE LION AND THE MOUSE.

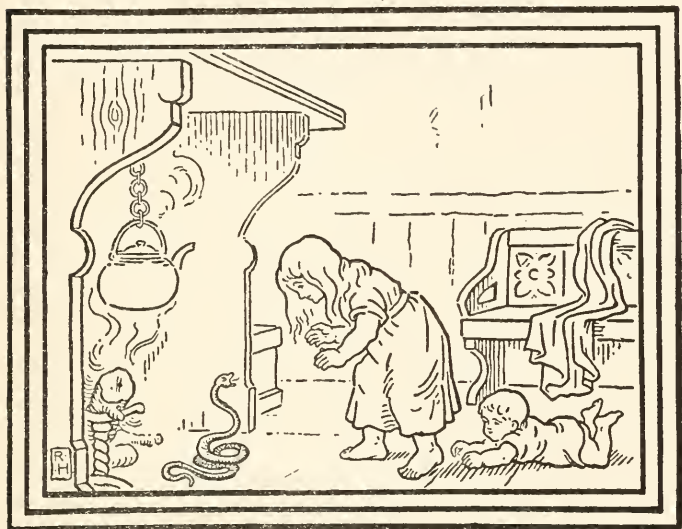
A Lion by accident laid his paw upon a poor, innocent Mouse. The frightened little creature, imagining she was just going to be devoured, begged hard for her life, urged that clemency was the fairest attribute of power, and earnestly entreated his majesty not to stain his illustrious claws with the blood of so insignificant an animal: upon which the Lion very generously set her at liberty. It happened a few days afterwards that the Lion, ranging for his prey, fell into the toils of the hunter. The Mouse heard his roarings, knew the voice of her benefactor, and immediately repairing to his assistance, gnawed in pieces the meshes of the net, and by delivering her preserver convinced him that there is no creature so much below another but may have it in his power to return a good office.



The folly of conferring either power upon the mischievous, or favors on the undeserving.

THE COUNTRYMAN AND THE SNAKE.

An honest Countryman observed a Snake lying under a hedge, almost frozen to death. He was moved with compassion; and bringing it home, he laid it near the fire, and gave it some new milk. Thus fed and cherished,



the creature presently began to revive: but no sooner had he recovered strength enough to do mischief than he sprung upon the Countryman's wife, bit one of his children, and, in short, threw the whole family into confusion and terror. Ungrateful wretch! said the Man, thou hast sufficiently taught me how ill-judged it is to confer benefits on the worthless and undeserving. So saying, he snatched up a hatchet and cut the Snake in pieces.

Gentle means, on many occasions, are more effectual than violent ones.

THE SUN AND THE WIND.



rays, which, melting our Traveler by degrees, at length obliged him to throw aside that cloak, which all the rage of Æolus could not compel him to resign. Learn hence, said Phœbus to the blustering god, that soft and gentle means will often accomplish what force and fury can never effect.

Phœbus and Æolus had once a dispute, which of them could soonest prevail with a certain Traveler to part with his cloak. Æolus began the attack, and assaulted him with great violence. But the Man, wrapping his cloak still closer about him, doubled his efforts to keep it, and went on his way. And now Phœbus darted his warm, insinuating

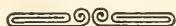


We are always ready to censure fortune for the ill effects
of our own carelessness.

FORTUNE AND THE SCHOOLBOY.

A Schoolboy, fatigued with play, threw himself down by the brink of a deep pit, where he fell fast asleep. Fortune happening to pass by, and seeing him in this dangerous situation, kindly gave him a tap on the shoulder: My dear child, said she, if you had fallen into this pit, I should have borne the blame, though in fact the accident would have been wholly owing to your own carelessness.

Misfortune, said a celebrated cardinal, is but another word for imprudence. This maxim is by no means absolutely true; certain, however, it is, that mankind suffer more evils from their own imprudence than from events which are not in their power to control.



A mere competence with liberty, is preferable to servitude
amid the greatest affluence.

THE WOLF AND THE MASTIFF.

A lean, half-starved Wolf inadvertently strolled in the way of a strong, well-fed Mastiff. The Wolf being much too weak to act upon the offensive, thought it most prudent to accost honest Towser in a friendly manner: and among other civilities, very complaisantly congratulated him on his goodly appearance. Why, yes, re-

turned the Mastiff, I am indeed in tolerable case; and if you will follow me, you may soon be altogether in as good a plight. The Wolf pricked up his ears at the proposal and requested to be informed what he must do to earn such plentiful meals. Very little, replied the Mastiff; only drive away beggars, caress my master, and be civil to his family. To these conditions the hungry Wolf had



no objection, and very readily consented to follow his new acquaintance wherever he would conduct him. As they were trotting along, the Wolf observed that the hair was worn in a circle round his friend's neck; which raised his curiosity to inquire what was the occasion of it? Nothing, answered the Mastiff, or a mere trifle; perhaps the collar to which my chain is sometimes fastened. Chain! replied the Wolf, with much sur-

prise; it should seem then that you are not permitted to rove about where and when you please. Not always, returned Towser, hanging down his head; but what does that signify? It signifies so much, rejoined the Wolf, that I am resolved to have no share in your dinners: half a meal with liberty, is in my estimation preferable to a full one without.



The folly of arrogating to ourselves works of which we are by no means capable.

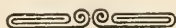
THE WASPS AND THE BEES.

Some honey-combs being claimed by a swarm of Wasps, the right owners protested against their demand, and the cause was referred to a Hornet. Witnesses being examined, they deposed that certain winged creatures, who had a loud hum, were of a yellowish color, and somewhat like Bees, were observed a considerable time hovering about the place where this nest was found. But this did not sufficiently decide the question; for these characteristics, the Hornet observed, agreed no less with the Bees than with the Wasps. At length, a sensible old Bee offered to put the matter upon this decisive issue: Let a place be appointed, said he, by the court, for the plaintiffs and defendants to work in: it will then soon appear which of us are capable of forming such regular cells, and afterwards of filling them with so delicious a fluid. The Wasps refusing to agree to this proposal, sufficiently convinced the judge on which side the right lay, and he decreed the honey-comb accordingly.

The least considerable of all mankind are seldom destitute of self-importance.

THE BULL AND THE GNAT.

A conceited Gnat, fully persuaded of his own importance, having placed himself on the horn of a Bull, expressed great uneasiness lest his weight should be inconvenient; and with much ceremony begged the Bull's pardon for the liberty he had taken; assuring him that he would immediately remove, if he pressed too hard upon him. Give yourself no uneasiness on that account, replied the Bull, I beseech you: for as I never perceived when you sat down, I shall probably not miss you whenever you rise up.



The great imprudence of an association with too powerful allies.

THE LION AND OTHER BEASTS HUNTING IN PARTNERSHIP.

A Leopard, a Lynx, and a Wolf were ambitious of the honor of hunting with the Lion. His savage majesty graciously condescended to their desire, and it was agreed that they should all have an equal share in whatever might be taken. They scour the forest, are unanimous in the pursuit, and, after a very fine chase, pull down a noble stag. It was divided with great dexterity by the Lynx, into four equal parts; but just as each was going to

secure his share—Hold, says the Lion, let no one presume to serve himself, till he hath heard our just and reasonable claims. I seize upon the first quarter by virtue of my prerogative; the second I think is due to my superior conduct and courage; I cannot forego the third on account of the necessities of my den; and if any one is inclined to dispute my right to the fourth, let him speak. Awed by the majesty of his frown, and the terror of his claws, they silently withdrew, resolving never to hunt again but with their equals.



The independence acquired by industry, preferable to the most splendid state of vassalage.

THE ANT AND THE FLY.

An Ant and a Fly had once a ridiculous contest about precedence, and were arguing which of the two was the more honorable: such disputes most frequently happen amongst the lowest and most worthless creatures. The Fly expressed great resentment, that such a poor, crawling insect should presume to lie basking in the same sunshine, with one so much her superior! Thou hast not surely the insolence, said she, to imagine thyself of an equal rank with me. I am none of your low mechanic creatures who live by their industry; but enjoy in plenty, and without labor, every thing that is truly delicious. I place myself uncontrolled upon the heads of kings; I kiss with freedom the lips of beauties; and feast upon the choicest sacrifices that are offered to the gods. To eat with the gods, replied the Ant, and to enjoy the favors of the fair and the powerful, would be great honor indeed, to one who was an invited or a welcome guest; but an impertinent intruder, who is driven out with aversion and contempt wherever he appears, has not much cause me-thinks to boast of his privileges. And as to the honor of not laboring for your subsistence; here too your boast is only your disgrace; for hence it is, that one half of the year you are destitute even of the common necessities of life; whilst I, at the same time retiring to the hoarded granaries, which my honest industry has filled, enjoy every satisfaction, independent of the favor either of beauties or of kings.

Cowards are incapable of true friendship.

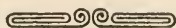
THE BEAR AND THE TWO FRIENDS.

Two Friends, setting out together upon a journey which led through a dangerous desert, mutually promised to assist each other, in whatever manner they might be assaulted. They had not proceeded far, before they perceived a Bear making towards them with great rage. There were no hopes in flight; but one of them, being very active, sprung up into a tree; upon which, the



other, throwing himself flat on the ground, held his breath, and pretended to be dead; remembering to have heard it asserted that this creature will not prey upon a lifeless carcass. The Bear came up, and after smelling of him some time, left him, and went on. When he was fairly out of sight and hearing, the hero from the tree calls out—Well, my friend, what said the Bear? He

seemed to whisper you very closely. He did so, replied the other; and gave me this good piece of advice, never to associate with a Wretch, who in the hour of danger will desert his friend.



Little minds are so much elevated by any advantage gained over their superiors, as to be immediately thrown off their guard against a sudden change of fortune.

THE LION AND THE GNAT.

Avaunt! thou paltry, contemptible insect! said a proud Lion one day to a Gnat that was frisking about in the air near his den. The Gnat, enraged at this unprovoked insult, vowed revenge, and immediately settled upon the Lion's neck. After having sufficiently teased him in that quarter, she quitted her station and retired under his belly; and from thence made her last and most formidable attack in his nostrils, where stinging him almost to madness, the Lion at length fell down, utterly spent with rage, vexation and pain. The Gnat having thus abundantly gratified her resentment, flew off in great exultation; but in the heedless transports of her success, not sufficiently attending to her own security, she found herself in her retreat unexpectedly entangled in the web of a Spider; who rushing out instantly upon her, put an end at once to her triumph and her life.

This fable instructs us never to suffer success so far to transport us, as to throw us off our guard against a reverse of fortune.



It is the enjoyment of what we possess that alone gives it any value.

THE MISER AND HIS TREASURE.

A Miser having scraped together a considerable sum of money, by denying himself the common conveniences of life, was much embarrassed where to lodge it most securely. After many perplexing debates with himself, he at length fixed upon a corner in a retired field, where he deposited his treasure, and with it his heart, in a hole which he dug for that purpose. His mind was now for a moment at ease, but he had not proceeded many paces in his way home, when all his anxiety returned, and he could not forbear going back to see that everything was safe. This he repeated again and again, till he was at last observed by a Laborer who was mending a hedge in

an adjacent meadow. The fellow concluding that something extraordinary must be the occasion of these frequent visits, marked the spot, and coming in the night in order to examine it, he discovered the prize, and bore it off unmolested. Early the next morning, the Miser again renewed his visit, when finding his treasure gone, he broke out into the most bitter exclamations. A Traveler, who happened to be passing by at the same time, was moved by his complaints to inquire into the occasion of them. Alas! replied the Miser, I have sustained the most cruel and irreparable loss! some villain has robbed me of a sum of money, which I buried under the stone no longer ago than yesterday. Buried! returned the Traveler, with surprise, a very extraordinary method truly of disposing of your riches! Why did you not rather keep them in your house, that they might be ready for your daily occasions? Daily occasions! resumed the Miser, with an air of much indignation; do you imagine I so little know the value of money, as to suffer it to be run away with by occasions? On the contrary, I had prudently resolved not to touch a single shilling of it. If that was your wise resolution, answered the Traveler, I see no sort of reason for your being thus afflicted; it is but putting this stone in the place of your treasure, and it will answer all your purposes full as well.



He whom we employ to execute our vengeance upon others, may, afterwards, turn his hand against ourselves.

THE HORSE AND THE STAG.

Before the use of horses was known in the world, one of those noble animals, having been insulted by a Stag, and finding himself unequal to his adversary, applied to a Man for assistance. The request was easily granted, and the Man putting a bridle in his mouth, and mounting upon his back, soon came up with the Stag, and laid him dead at his enemy's feet. The Horse having thus gratified his revenge, thanked his auxiliary: And now will I return in triumph, said he, and reign the undisputed lord of the forest. By no means, replied the Man; I shall have occasion for your services, and you must go home with me. So saying, he led him to his hovel, where the unhappy steed spent the remainder of his days in a laborious servitude; sensible, too late, that, how pleasing soever revenge may appear, it always costs more to a generous mind than the purchase is worth.

That when we are going to encounter difficulties, we should depend more upon our own strength than the assistance of our neighbors.

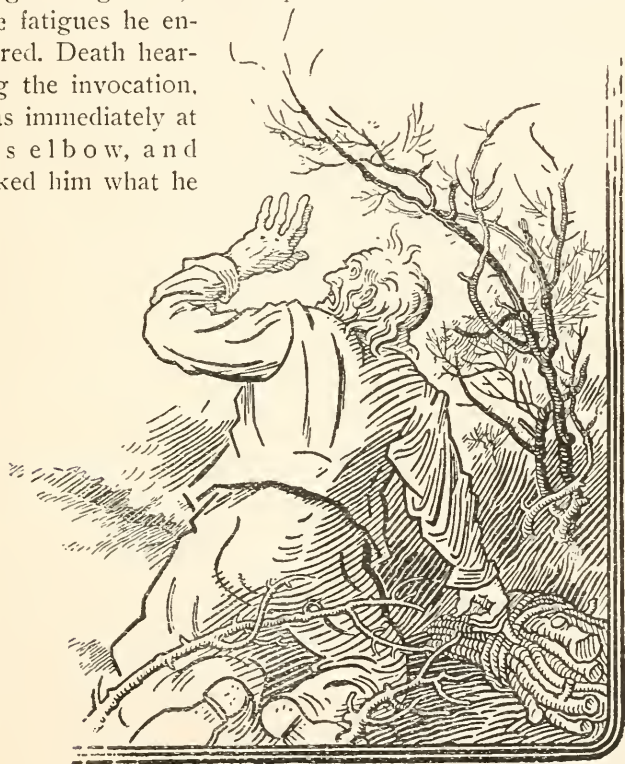
THE FOX AND THE GOAT.

A Fox and a Goat traveling together, in a very sultry day, found themselves exceedingly thirsty, when looking round the country in order to discover a place where they might probably meet with water, they at length descried a clear spring at the bottom of a pit. They both eagerly descended, and having sufficiently allayed their thirst, it was time to consider how they should get out. Many expedients for that purpose were mutually proposed, and rejected. At last the crafty Fox cried out with great joy, I have a thought just struck into my mind, which I am confident will extricate us out of our difficulty; do you, said he to the Goat, only rear yourself up upon your hind legs, and rest your fore feet against the side of the pit. In this posture, I will climb up to your head, from whence I shall be able, with a spring, to reach the top; and when I am once there, you are sensible it will be very easy for me to pull you out by the horns. The simple goat liked the proposal well; and immediately placed himself as directed: by means of which the Fox, without much difficulty, gained the top. And now, said the Goat, give me the assistance you promised. Thou old fool, replied the Fox, hadst thou but half as much wit as beard, thou wouldst never have believed that I would hazard my own life to save thine. However, I will leave with thee a piece of advice, which may be of service to thee hereafter, if thou shouldst have the good fortune to make thy escape: Never venture into a pit again, before thou hast well considered how to get out of it.

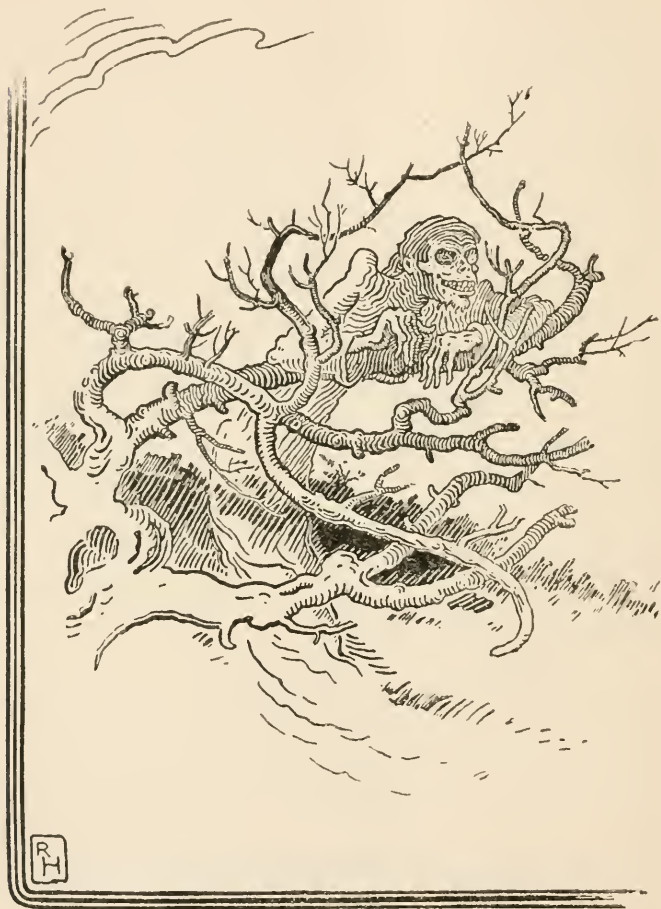
Men under calamity may seem to wish for Death, but
they seldom bid him welcome when he stares
them in the face.

THE OLD MAN AND DEATH.

A feeble old Man, quite spent with carrying a burthen
of sticks, which with much labor he had gathered in a
neighboring wood, called upon Death to release him from
the fatigues he en-
dured. Death hear-
ing the invocation,
was immediately at
his elbow, and
asked him what he



wanted. Frightened and trembling at the unexpected appearance—O good sir! said he, my burthen had like to have slipped from me, and being unable to recover it myself, I only implored your assistance to lay it on my shoulders again.



That even poverty with peace is preferable to the greatest
affluence amidst anxiety.

THE COURT AND COUNTRY-MOUSE.

A contented Country-mouse had once the honor to receive a visit from an old acquaintance belonging to the Court. The Country-mouse, extremely glad to see her guest, very hospitably set before her the best cheese and bacon which her cottage afforded, and as to their beverage, it was the purest water from the spring. The repast was homely indeed, but the welcome hearty: they sat and chatted away the evening together very agreeably, and then retired in peace and quietness each to her little cell. The next morning when the guest was to take her leave, she kindly pressed her country friend to accompany her; setting forth in very pompous terms the great elegance and plenty in which they lived at court. The Country-mouse was easily prevailed upon, and they set out together. It was late in the evening when they arrived at the palace; however, in one of the rooms, they found the remains of a sumptuous entertainment. There were creams, and jellies, and sweetmeats; and every thing, in short, of the most delicate kind: the cheese was Parmesan, and they wetted their whiskers in exquisite champagne. But before they had half finished their repast, they were alarmed with the barking and scratching of a lap-dog; then the mewing of a cat frightened them almost to death; by and by, a whole train of servants burst into the room, and everything was swept away in an instant. Ah! my dear friend, said the Country-mouse, as soon as she had recovered courage enough to speak, if your fine living

is thus interrupted with fears and dangers, let me return to my plain food, and my peaceful cottage; for what is elegance, without ease; or plenty, with an aching heart?



The surest way to gain our ends is to moderate our desires.

THE BOY AND THE FILBERTS.

A certain Boy, as Epictetus tells the fable, put his hand into a pitcher, where great plenty of figs and filberts were deposited; he grasped as many as his fist could possibly hold, but when he endeavored to pull it out, the narrowness of the neck prevented him. Unwilling to lose any of them, but unable to draw out his hand, he burst into tears, and bitterly bemoaned his hard fortune. An honest fellow who stood by, gave him this wise and reasonable advice: Grasp only half the quantity, my boy, and you will easily succeed.

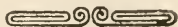


Those who keep bad company must often expect to suffer for the misbehavior of their companions.

THE FARMER, THE CRANES, AND THE STORK.

A Stork was unfortunately drawn into company with some Cranes, who were just setting out on a party of pleasure, as they called it, which in truth was to rob the fish-ponds of a neighboring Farmer. Our simple Stork agreed to make one; and it so happened, that they were all taken in the act. The Cranes, having been old offenders, had very little to say for themselves, and were presently dispatched; but the Stork pleaded hard for his life; he urged that it was his first fault, that he was not

naturally addicted to stealing fish, that he was famous for piety toward his parents, and in short, for many other virtues. Your piety and virtue, said the Farmer, may for aught I know be exemplary; but your being in company with thieves renders it very suspicious, and you must therefore submit with patience to share the same punishment with your companions.

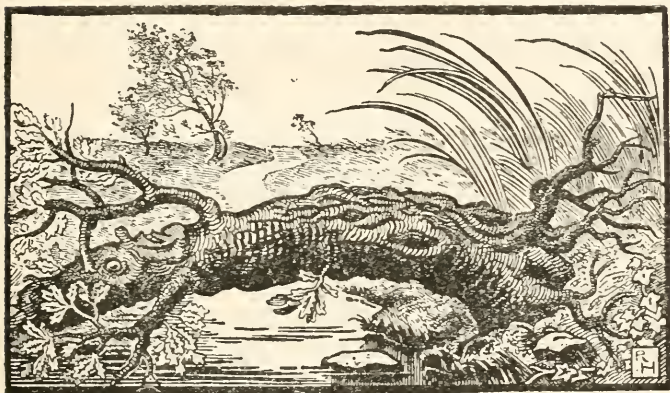


The courage of meeting death in an honorable cause is more commendable than any address or artifice we can make use of to evade it.

THE OAK AND THE WILLOW.

A conceited Willow had once the vanity to challenge his mighty neighbor the Oak, to a trial of strength. It was to be determined by the next storm, and Æolus was addressed by both parties, to exert his most powerful efforts. This was no sooner asked than granted; and a violent hurricane arose: when the pliant Willow, bending from the blast, or shrinking under it, evaded all its force; while the generous Oak, disdaining to give way, opposed

its fury, and was torn up by the roots. Immediately the Willow began to exult, and to claim the victory: when thus the fallen Oak interrupted his exultation: Callest thou this a trial of strength? Poor wretch! not to thy strength, but weakness; not to thy boldly facing danger, but meanly skulking from it, thou owest thy present safety. I am an oak, though fallen; thou still a willow, though unhurt; but who, except so mean a wretch as thyself, would prefer an ignominious life, preserved by craft or cowardice, to the glory of meeting death in a brave contention?



We should immediately decline all commerce with a person we find to be a double-dealer.

THE SATYR AND THE TRAVELER.

A poor man traveling in the depth of winter, through a dreary forest, no inn to receive him, no human creature to befriend or comfort him, was in danger of being starved to death. At last, however, he came to the cave of a Satyr, where he entreated leave to rest a while, and shelter himself from the inclemency of the weather. The Satyr very



civilly complied with his request. The man had no sooner entered, than he began to blow his fingers. His host, surprised at the novelty of the action, was curious to know the meaning of it. I do it, said the Traveler, to warm my frozen joints, which are benumbed with cold. Presently the Satyr having prepared a mess of hot gruel to refresh his guest, the man found it necessary to blow his porridge, too. What, inquired the Satyr, is not your gruel hot enough? Yes, replied the Traveler, too hot;

and I blow it to make it cooler. Do you so? quoth the Satyr; then get out of my cave as fast as you can, for I desire to have no communication with a creature, that blows hot and cold with the same breath.



Some expect the thanks that are due to a civility, while they endeavor clandestinely to undermine the value of it.

THE FARMER AND THE STAG.

A Stag, who had left at some distance a pack of hounds, came up to a Farmer, and desired he would suffer him to hide himself in a little coppice which joined to his house. The Farmer, on condition that he would forbear to enter a field of wheat, which lay before him, and was now ready for the sickle, immediately gave him leave, and promised not to betray him. The squire with his train instantly appeared, and inquiring whether he had not seen the Stag; No, said the Farmer, he has not passed this way, I assure you; but, in order to curry favor at the same time with his worship, he pointed slyly with his finger to the place where the poor beast lay concealed. This, however, the sportsman, intent on his game, did not observe, but passed on with his dogs across the very field. As soon as the Stag perceived they were gone, he prepared to steal off, without speaking a word. Methinks, cried the Farmer, you might thank me, at least, for the refuge I have afforded you; Yes, said the Stag, and had your hands been as honest as your tongue, I certainly should; but all the return that a double dealer has to expect, is a just indignation and contempt.

The silly ambition to vie with our superiors, in regard to outward figure rather than inward accomplishments, is often the cause of utter ruin.

THE FROG AND THE OX.

A Frog being wonderfully struck with the size and majesty of an Ox that was grazing in the marshes, could



not forbear endeavoring to expand herself to the same portly magnitude. After puffing and swelling for some time: What think you, sister, said she, will this do? Far from it. Will this? By no means. But this



surely will. Nothing like it. In short, after many ridiculous efforts to the same fruitless purpose, the simple frog burst her skin, and miserably expired upon the spot.

There is no error too extravagant for prepossession and partiality.

THE MIMIC AND THE COUNTRYMAN.

Men often judge wrong from some foolish prejudice; and whilst they persist in the defence of their mistakes, are sometimes brought to shame by incontestible evidence.

A certain wealthy patrician, intending to treat the Roman people with some theatrical entertainments, published a reward to any one who could furnish out a new or uncommon diversion. Excited by emulation, the artists assembled from all parts; among whom, a Mimic well known for his arch wit, gave out that he had a kind of entertainment that had never yet been produced upon any stage.

This report being spread about, brought the whole city together. The theater could hardly contain the number of spectators. And when the artist appeared alone upon the stage, without any apparatus, without any prompter or assistant, curiosity and suspense kept the spectators in a profound silence.

On a sudden the performer thrust down his head into his bosom, and mimicked the squeaking of a young pig so naturally, that the audience insisted upon it, he had a real pig under his cloak, and ordered him to be searched. Which being done, when nothing appeared, they loaded the man with encomiums and honored him with the most extravagant applause.

A country fellow observing what passed—Faith, says he, I can do better than he; and immediately gave out that he would perform the same thing much better the

next day. Accordingly, greater crowds assemble: pre-possessed, however, in favor of the first artist, they sit prepared to laugh at the clown, rather than to judge fairly of his performance.



They both came out upon the stage. The Mimic grunts away first, is received with vast applause, and the loudest acclamations. Then the Countryman, pretending that he concealed a little pig under his clothes (which in fact he did), plucked the ear of the animal, and by the pain forced him to utter his natural cry. The people exclaimed aloud that the first performer had imitated the pig much more naturally, and would have hissed the Countryman off the stage; but producing the real pig from his bosom, and convincing them, by a visible proof, of their ridiculous error; See, gentlemen, says he, what pretty sort of judges you are!

It is ever dangerous to be long conversant with persons of a bad character.

THE DOG AND THE CROCODILE.

As a Dog was coursing the banks of the Nile, he grew thirsty, but fearing to be seized by the monsters of that river, he would not stop to satiate his thirst, but lapped as he ran. A Crocodile, raising his head above the surface of the water, asked him, Why he was in such a hurry? he had often, he said, wished for his acquaintance, and should be glad to embrace the present opportunity. You do me great honor, said the Dog, but it is to avoid such companions as you that I am in so much haste.



A false estimate of our own abilities ever exposes us to ridicule, and sometimes to danger.

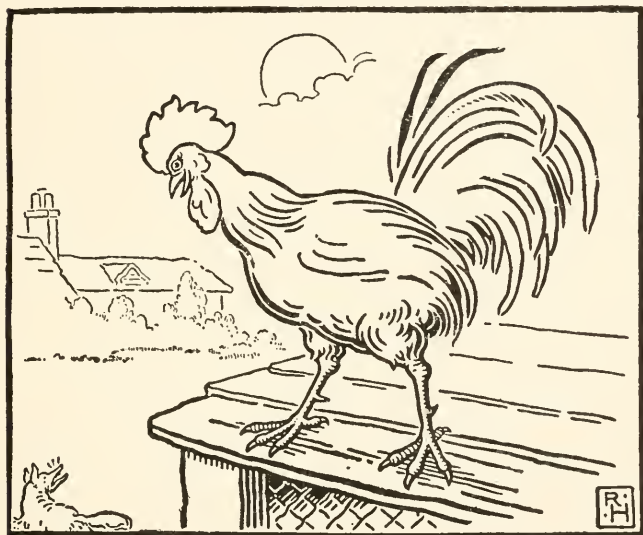
THE EAGLE AND THE CROW.

An Eagle, from the top of a high mountain, made a stoop at a lamb, pounced upon it, and bore it away to her young. A Crow, who had built her nest in a cedar near the foot of the rock, observing what passed, was ambitious of performing the same exploit; and, darting from her nest, fixed her talons in the fleece of another lamb. But neither able to move her prey, nor disentangle her feet, she was taken by the shepherd, and carried away for his children to play with; who eagerly inquiring what bird it was,—An hour ago, said he, she fancied herself an Eagle; however, I suppose she is by this time convinced that she is but a Crow.

To retort the artifice employed against us is an allowable part of self-defence.

THE COCK AND THE FOX.

An experienced old Cock was setting himself to roost upon a high bough, when a Fox appeared under the tree. I am come, said the artful hypocrite, to acquaint you in the name of all my brethren, that a general peace is con-



cluded between us and your whole family. Descend immediately, I beseech you, that we may mutually embrace upon so joyful and unexpected an event. My good friend, replied the Cock, nothing could be more agreeable to me than this news; and to hear it from you increases my satisfaction. But I spy two greyhounds at a dis-

tance coming this way, who are probably dispatched as couriers with the treaty; as they run very swiftly, and will certainly be here in a few minutes, I will wait their arrival, that we may all four embrace together. Reynard well knew that if this was the case, it was no time for him to remain there any longer; pretending, therefore, to be in great haste, Adieu, said he, for the present; we will reserve our rejoicings to another opportunity; upon which he darted into the woods with all imaginable expedition. Old Chanticleer no sooner saw him depart, than he crowed abundantly in the triumph of his artifice, for by a harmless stratagem to disappoint the malevolent intentions of those who are endeavoring to deceive us to our ruin, is not only innocent but laudable.



It were more prudent to acquiesce under an injury from a single person, than by an act of vengeance to bring upon us the resentment of a whole community.

THE BEAR AND THE BEES.

A Bear happened to be stung by a Bee, and the pain was so acute that in the madness of revenge he ran into the garden, and overturned the hive. This outrage provoked their anger to a high degree, and brought the fury of the whole swarm upon him. They attacked him with such violence, that his life was in danger, and it was with the utmost difficulty that he made his escape, wounded from head to tail. In this desperate condition, lamenting his misfortune, and licking his sores, he could not forbear reflecting, how much more advisable it had been to have patiently acquiesced under one injury, than thus, by an unprofitable resentment, to have provoked a thousand.

Avarice often misses its point through the means it uses to secure it.

THE ASS AND HIS MASTER.

A diligent Ass, that had long served a severe master, daily loaded beyond his strength, and kept but at very short commons, happened one day in his old age to be oppressed with a burden of earthen-ware. His strength being much impaired, and the road deep and uneven, he unfortunately made a trip, and unable to recover himself, fell down and broke all the vessels to pieces. His Master, transported with rage, began to beat him with great violence, and without mercy. To whom the poor Ass, lifting up his head as he lay on the ground, strongly remonstrated: Unfeeling wretch! to thy own avaricious cruelty in first pinching me of food, and then loading me beyond my strength, thou owest the misfortune which thou so unjustly imputest to me.



Neither ingenuity nor learning is entitled to regard but in proportion as they contribute to the happiness of life.

THE BEE AND THE SPIDER.

The Bee and the Spider once entered into a warm debate which was the better artist. The Spider urged her skill in the mathematics; and asserted that no one was half so well acquainted as herself with the construction of lines, angles, squares, and circles; that the web she daily

wove was a specimen of art inimitable by any other creature in the universe; and besides, that her works were derived from herself alone, the product of her own bowels; whereas the boasted honey of the Bee was stolen from every herb and flower of the field; nay, that she had obligations even to the meanest weeds. To this the Bee replied, that she was in hopes the art of extracting honey from the meanest weeds, would at least have been allowed her as an excellence; and that as to her stealing sweets from the herbs and flowers of the field, her skill was there so conspicuous, that no flower ever suffered the least diminution of its fragrance from so delicate an operation. Then, as to the Spider's vaunted knowledge in the construction of lines and angles, she believed she might safely rest the merits of her cause on the regularity alone of her combs; but since she could add to this the sweetness and excellence of her honey, and the various purposes for which her wax was employed, she had nothing to fear from a comparison of her skill with that of the weaver of a flimsy cobweb; for the value of every art, she observed, is chiefly to be estimated by its use.



The fomentor of mischief is at least as culpable as he who puts it in execution.

THE TRUMPETER.

A Trumpeter in a certain army happened to be taken prisoner. He was ordered immediately to execution, but pleaded in excuse for himself, that it was unjust a person should suffer death, who, far from an intention of mischief,

did not even wear an offensive weapon. So much the rather, replied one of the enemy, shalt thou die; since without any design of fighting thyself, thou excitest others



to the bloody business; for he that is the abettor of a bad action, is at least equally guilty with him that commits it.

It is ever imprudent to join interests with those who are able to impose upon us their own conditions.

THE SNAKE AND THE HEDGE-HOG.

By the entreaties of a Hedge-hog half starved with cold, a Snake was once persuaded to receive him into her cell. He was no sooner entered, than his prickles began to be very uneasy to his companion; upon which, the Snake desired he would provide himself another lodging, as she found her apartment was not large enough to accommodate both. Nay, said the Hedge-hog, let them that are uneasy in their situation exchange it; for my own part, I am very well contented where I am; and if you are not, you are welcome to remove whenever you think proper.



Fortune, without the concurrence of vice, cannot effectually destroy our happiness; whereas vice, without the help of fortune, can make us miserable to the last extreme.

VICE AND FORTUNE.

Fortune and Vice, according to Plutarch, had once a violent contest, which of them had it most in their power to make mankind unhappy. Fortune boasted that she could take from men every external good, and bring upon them every external evil. Be it so, replied Vice; but this is by no means sufficient without my assistance; whereas without yours, I am able to render them completely miserable; nay, in spite, too, of all your endeavors to make them happy.

Whatever fancy may determine, the standing value of all things is in proportion to their use.

MINERVA'S OLIVE.

The gods, say the heathen mythologists, have each of them their favorite tree. Jupiter preferred the oak, Venus the myrtle, and Phœbus the laurel; Cybele the pine, and Hercules the poplar. Minerva, continues the mythologist, surprised that they should choose barren trees, asked Jupiter the reason. It is, said he, to prevent any suspicion that we confer the honor we do them, for the sake of their fruit. Let folly suspect what it pleases, returned Minerva; I shall not scruple to acknowledge, that I make choice of the olive for the usefulness of its fruit. O daughter, replied the father of the gods, it is with justice that men esteem thee wise; for nothing is truly valuable that is not useful.



Industry is itself a treasure.

THE FARMER AND HIS SONS.

A wealthy old Farmer, who had for some time been declining in his health, perceiving that he had not many days to live, called his sons together to his bedside. My dear children, said the dying man, I leave it with you as my last injunction, not to part with the farm which has been in our family for these hundred years; for, to disclose to you a secret which I received from my father, and which I now think proper to communicate to you,

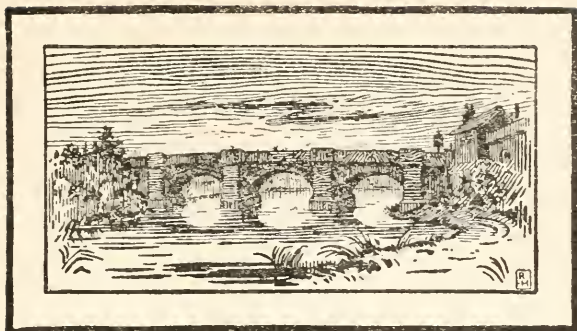
there is a treasure hid somewhere in the grounds; though I never could discover the particular spot where it lies concealed. However, as soon as the harvest is got in, spare no pains in the search, and I am well assured you will not lose your labor. The wise old man was no sooner laid in his grave, and the time he mentioned arrived, than his sons went to work, and with great vigor and alacrity turned up again and again every foot of ground belonging to their farm; the consequence of which was, although they did not find the object of their pursuit, that their lands yielded a far more plentiful crop than those of their neighbors. At the end of the year, when they were settling their accounts, and computing their extraordinary profits, I would venture a wager, said one of the brothers more acute than the rest, that this was the concealed wealth my father meant. I am sure, at least, we have found by experience, that Industry is itself a treasure.



A total neglect is the best return the generous can make to the scurrility of the base.

THE LION AND THE ASS.

A conceited Ass had once the impertinence to bray forth some contemptuous speeches against the Lion. The suddenness of the insult, at first raised some emotions of wrath in his breast; but turning his head and perceiving from whence it came, they immediately subsided, and he very sedately walked on, without deigning to honor the contemptible creature, even so much as with an angry word.



The necessity of pursuing the dictates of one's reason instead of attempting to please all mankind.

THE MILLER, HIS SON, AND THEIR ASS.

A Miller and his Son were driving their Ass to market, in order to sell him. That he might get thither fresh and in good condition, they drove him on gently before them. They had not gone far, when they met a company of travelers. Sure, say they, you are mighty careful of your Ass; methinks one of you might as well get up and ride, as let him walk on at his ease, while you trudge after him on foot. In compliance with this advice, the old man set his Son upon the beast. They had scarce advanced a quarter of a mile further, when they met another company. You lazy booby, said one of the party, why don't you get down, and let your poor father ride? Upon this, the old man made his son dismount, and got up himself. In this manner they had not marched many furlongs, when a third company began to insult the father. You hard-hearted, unnatural wretch, say they, how can you suffer that poor

lad to wade through the dirt, while you like an alderman ride at your ease? The good-natured Miller stood corrected, and immediately took his son up behind him. And now, the next man they met exclaimed with more vehemence and indignation than all the rest. Was there



ever such a couple of lazy boobies! to overload in so uncomfortable a manner a poor dumb creature, who is far less able to carry them than they are to carry him! Anything to please you, said the old man; we can but try.

So, alighting with his Son, they tied the legs of the Ass together, and by the help of a pole, endeavored to carry him on their shoulders over a bridge near the entrance of the town. This entertaining sight brought the people in crowds to laugh at it; till the Ass, not liking the noise, nor the strange handling he was subject to, broke the cords that bound him, and, tumbling off the pole, fell into the river and was drowned.

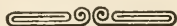
Upon this, the Miller, vexed and ashamed, made the best of his way home again, convinced that by trying to please everybody he had pleased nobody, and lost his Ass into the bargain.



The intemperate rage of clients gives the lawyer an opportunity of seizing the property in dispute.

THE LION, THE TIGER AND THE FOX.

A Lion and a Tiger jointly seized on a young fawn, which they immediately killed. This they had no sooner performed, than they fell to fighting, in order to decide whose property it should be. The battle was so bloody, and so obstinate, that they were both compelled, through weariness and loss of blood, to desist; and lay down by mutual consent, totally disabled. At this instant, a wily Fox unluckily came by; who, perceiving their situation, made bold to seize the contested prey, and bore it off unmolested. As soon as the Lion could recover breath, How foolish, said he, has been our conduct! Instead of being contented as we ought, with our respective shares, our senseless rage has rendered us unable to prevent this rascally fox from defrauding us of the whole.



There would be little chance of detecting hypocrisy were it not always addicted to over-act its part.

THE WOLF IN DISGUISE.

A Wolf who by his frequent visits to a flock of sheep in his neighborhood, began to be extremely well known to them, thought it expedient, for the more successfully carrying on his depredations, to appear in a new character. To this end he disguised himself in a shepherd's

habit; and resting his fore feet upon a stick, which served him by way of crook, he softly made his approach toward the fold. It happened that the shepherd and his dog were both of them extended on the grass, fast asleep, so that he would certainly have succeeded in his project, if he had not imprudently attempted to imitate the shepherd's voice. The horrid noise awakened them both; when the Wolf, encumbered with his disguise, and finding it impossible either to resist, or to flee, yielded up his life an easy prey to the shepherd's dog.



The young and artless should make caution supply the place of years and experience.

THE WOLF AND THE LAMB.

A flock of sheep were feeding in a meadow, while their dogs were asleep, and their shepherd at a distance playing on his pipe beneath the shade of a spreading elm. A young inexperienced Lamb, observing a half-starved Wolf peeping through the pales of the enclosure, entered into conversation with him. Pray what are you seeking for here? said the Lamb. I am looking, replied the Wolf, for some tender grass; for nothing, you know, is more pleasant than to feed in a fresh pasture, and to slake one's thirst at a crystal stream; both which, I perceive, you enjoy within these pales in their utmost perfection. Happy creature! continued he, how much I envy you your lot! who are in possession of the utmost I desire, for I have long been taught by philosophy, to be satisfied with a little. It seems then, returned the Lamb, that those

who say you feed on flesh, accuse you falsely, since a little grass will easily content you. If this be true, let us for the future live like brethren, and feed together. So saying, the simple Lamb imprudently crept through the fence, and became at once a prey to our pretended philosopher, and a sacrifice to her own inexperience and credulity.



The different lights in which things appear to different judgments recommend respect for the opinions of others, even when we retain our own.

THE CHAMELEON.

Two travelers happened on their journey to be engaged in a warm dispute about the color of the Chameleon. One of them affirmed that it was blue; that he had seen it with his own eyes, upon the naked branch of a tree, feeding on the air, in a very clear day. The other strongly asserted that it was green, and that he had viewed it very closely and minutely on the broad leaf of a fig tree. Both of them were positive, and the dispute was rising to a quarrel, but a third person luckily coming by, they agreed to refer the question to his decision. Gentlemen, said the arbitrator, with a smile of great self-satisfaction, you could not have been more lucky in your reference, as I happen to have caught one of them last night; but indeed you are both mistaken, for the creature is totally black. Black! cried they both; impossible! Nay, quoth the umpire, with great assurance, the matter may soon be decided, for I immediately enclosed my chameleon in a little paper

box, and here he is. So saying, he drew it out of his pocket, opened his box, and behold it was white as snow. The positive disputants looked equally surprised, and equally confounded, while the sagacious reptile, assuming the air of a philosopher, thus admonished them: Ye children of men, learn diffidence and moderation in your opinions. It is true, you happen, in the present instance, to be all in the right, and have only considered the subject under different circumstances; but pray, for the future, allow other men to have eyesight as well as yourselves; nor wonder if every one prefers the testimony of his own senses, to that of another's.



We should bear with patience a small evil, when it is
connected with a greater good.

THE FOX AND THE BRAMBLE.

A Fox, closely pursued by a pack of dogs, took shelter under the covert of a bramble. He rejoiced in this asylum, and for a while was very happy; but soon found, that if he attempted to stir, he was wounded by thorns and prickles on every side. However, making a virtue of necessity, he forbore to complain, and comforted himself with reflecting, that no bliss is perfect: that good and evil are mixed and flow from the same fountain. These briars indeed, said he, will tear my skin a little, yet they keep off the dogs. For the sake of the good, then, let me bear the evil with patience; each bitter has its sweet, and these brambles, though they wound my flesh, preserve my life from danger.

We cannot reasonably expect those to bear a part in our ill fortune, whom we never permitted to share in our prosperity.

THE TRAVELERS AND THE MONEY-BAG.

As two men were traveling on the road, one of them espied a bag of money lying on the ground, and picking it up, I am in luck this morning, said he, I have found a bag of money. Yes, replied the other, though, methinks, you should not say I, but we have found it, for when two friends are traveling together, they ought equally to share in any accidental good fortune that may happen to attend them. No, replied the former, it was I that found it, and I must insist upon keeping it. He had no sooner spoken the words than they were alarmed with a hue and cry after a thief, who had that morning taken a purse upon the road. Lord, says the finder, this is extremely unfortunate, we shall certainly be seized. Good sir, replied the other, be pleased not to say we, but I; as you would not allow me to share in the prize, you have no right to make me a partner in the punishment.



Different kinds of experience account for different kinds of conduct.

THE FALCON AND THE HEN.

Of all the creatures I ever knew, said a Falcon to a Hen, you are certainly the most ungrateful. What instance of ingratitude, replied the Hen, can you justly charge upon me? The greatest, returned the Falcon; ingratitude to

your highest benefactors, men. Do they not feed you every day, and shelter you every night? Nevertheless, when they endeavor to court you to them, you ungratefully forget all their kindness, and fly from them as from an enemy. Now I, who am wild by nature, and no way obliged to them; yet upon the least of their caresses, suffer myself to be taken, and go or come at their command. All this is very true, replied the Hen, but there may be a sufficient reason both for my fear, and for your familiarity; I believe you never saw a single falcon roasting at the fire; whereas I have seen a hundred hens trussed for the spit.

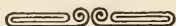


There are numbers of people who would unhinge the world to ease themselves of the smallest inconvenience.

THE SORCERESS.

Night and silence had now given repose to the whole world; when an old, ill-natured Sorceress, in order to exercise her infernal arts, entered into a gloomy wood, that trembled at her approach. The scene of her horrid incantations was within the circumference of a large circle; in the center of which an altar was raised, where the hallowed vervain blazed in triangular flames, while the mischievous hag pronounced the dreadful words, which bound all hell in obedience to her charms. She blows a raging pestilence from her lips into the neighboring folds; the innocent cattle die, to afford a fit sacrifice to the infernal deities. The moon, by powerful spells drawn down

from her orbs, enters the wood; legions of spirits from Pluto's realms appear before the altar, and demand her pleasure. Tell me, said she, where I shall find what I have lost, my favorite little dog. How!—cried they all, enraged—Impertinent Beldame! must the order of nature be inverted, and the repose of every creature disturbed, for the sake of thy little dog?



We greatly diminish the happiness of life by undervaluing all that is short of perfection.

THE DISCONTENTED ASS.

In the depth of winter, a poor Ass prayed heartily for the spring, that he might exchange a cold lodging, and a heartless truss of straw, for a little warm weather, and a mouthful of fresh grass. In a short time, according to his wish, the warm weather and the fresh grass came on; but brought with them so much toil and business, that he was soon as weary of the spring as before of the winter; and he now became impatient for the approach of summer. Summer arrives: but the heat, the harvest work, and other drudgeries and inconveniences of the season, set him as far from happiness as before; which he now flattered himself would be found in the plenty of autumn. But here too he is disappointed, for what with the carrying of apples, roots, fuel for the winter, and other provisions, he was in autumn more fatigued than ever. Having thus trod round the circle of the year, in a course of restless labor, uneasiness and disappointment; and found no

season, nor station of life, without its business and its trouble; he was forced at last to acquiesce in the cold comfort of winter, where his complaint began: convinced that in this world there is no true happiness.



We exclaim loudly against that inconstancy in another, to which we originally gave occasion, by our own.

THE ROSE AND THE BUTTERFLY.

A fine powdered Butterfly fell in love with a beautiful Rose, who expanded her charms in a neighboring parterre. Matters were soon adjusted between them, and they mutually vowed eternal fidelity. The Butterfly, perfectly satisfied with the success of his armor, took a tender leave of his mistress, and did not return again till noon. What! said the Rose, when she saw him approaching, is the ardent passion you vowed, so soon extinguished? It is an age since you paid me a visit. But no wonder; for I observed you courting by turns every flower in the garden. You little coquet, replied the Butterfly, it well becomes you, truly, to reproach me with my gallantries; when in fact I only copy the example which you yourself have set me. For, not to mention the satisfaction with which you admitted the kisses of the fragrant zephyr; did I not see you displaying your charms to the bee, the fly, the wasp, and in short, encouraging and receiving the addresses of every buzzing insect that fluttered within your view?

If you will be a coquet, you must expect to find me inconstant.

He that is employed in works of use, generally advantages himself or others; while he who toils for fame alone must expect to often lose his labor.

THE SPIDER AND THE SILKWORM.

A Spider busied in spreading his web from one side of the room to the other, was asked by an industrious Silkworm, to what end he spent so much time and labor, in making such a number of lines and circles? The Spider angrily replied, Do not disturb me, thou ignorant thing; I transmit my ingenuity to posterity, and fame is the object of my wishes. Just as he had spoken, Susan the chambermaid, coming into the room to feed her silkworms, sees the Spider at his work; and with one stroke of her broom, sweeps him away, and destroys at once his labors and his hopes of fame.



Curiosity often excites those people to hazardous undertakings, whom vanity and indiscretion render totally unfit for them.

THE TORTOISE AND THE TWO DUCKS.

A Tortoise, weary of passing her days in the same obscure corner, conceived a wonderful inclination to visit foreign countries. Two Ducks, whom the simple Tortoise acquainted with her intention, undertook to oblige her upon the occasion. Accordingly they told her, that if she would fasten her mouth to the middle of a pole, they

would take the two ends, and transport her wherever she chose to be conveyed. The Tortoise approved of the expedient; and everything being prepared, the Ducks began their flight with her. They had not traveled far in the air, when they were met by a Crow, who inquiring what they were bearing along, they replied, the queen of the tortoises. The Tortoise, vain of the new and unmerited appellation, was going to confirm the title, when opening her mouth for that purpose, she let go her hold, and was dashed to pieces by her fall.

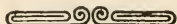


There is more to be expected from sedate and silent, than from noisy, turbulent and ostentatious beginnings.

THE TWO SPRINGS.

Two Springs which issued from the same mountain, began their course together; one of them took her way in a silent and gentle stream, while the other rushed along with a sounding and rapid current. Sister, said the latter, at the rate you move, you will probably be dried up before you advance much farther; whereas, for myself, I will venture a wager, that within two or three hundred furlongs I shall become navigable, and after distributing commerce and wealth wherever I flow, I shall majestically proceed to pay my tribute to the ocean: so farewell, dear sister, and patiently submit to your fate. Her sister made no reply; but calmly descending to the meadows below, increased her stream by numberless little rills, which she collected in her progress, till at length she was enabled to rise into a considerable river; while the proud stream,

which had the vanity to depend solely upon her own sufficiency, continued a shallow brook, and was glad at last to be helped forward, by throwing herself into the arms of her despised sister

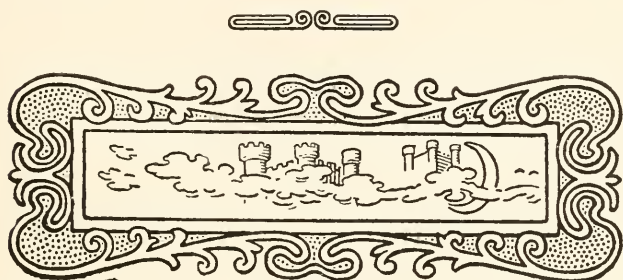


Repeated instances of artifice, create a suspicion that is our guard against it.

THE CAT AND THE OLD RAT.

A certain Cat had made such unmerciful havoc among the vermin of his neighborhood, that not a single rat or mouse dared venture to appear abroad. Puss was soon convinced that if affairs remained in their present situation, he must be totally unsupplied with provision. After mature deliberation therefore, he resolved to have recourse to stratagem. For this purpose, he suspended himself from a shelf with his head downwards, pretending to be dead. The rats and mice observing him, as they peeped from their holes, in this dangling attitude, concluded he was hanged for some misdemeanor; and with great joy immediately sallied forth in quest of their prey. Puss, as soon as a sufficient number were collected together, quitting her hold, dropped into the midst of them; and very few had the fortune to make good their retreat. This artifice having succeeded so well, he was encouraged to try the event of a second. Accordingly, he whitened his coat all over, by rolling himself in a heap of flour, and in this disguise lay concealed in the bottom of a meal tub. This stratagem was executed in general with the same effect as the former. But an old experi-

enced Rat, altogether as cunning as her adversary, was not so easily ensnared. I don't much like, said he, that white heap yonder; something whispers me, there is mischief concealed under it. It is true, it may be meal; but it may likewise be something that I shall not relish quite so well. There can be no harm, at least, in keeping at a proper distance, for caution, I am sure, is the parent of security.



When we dwell much on distant and chimerical advantages we neglect our present business, and are exposed to real misfortune.

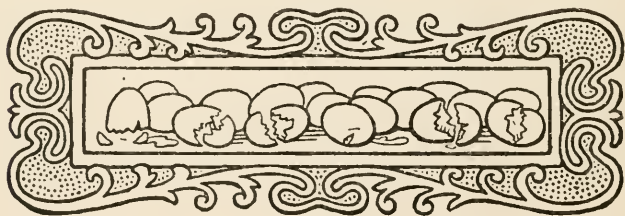
THE COUNTRY MAID AND HER MILK-PAIL.

A Country Maid was walking very deliberately with a pail of milk upon her head, when she fell into the following train of reflections. The money for which I shall sell this milk, will enable me to increase my stock of eggs to three hundred. These eggs, allowing for what may prove addled, and what may be destroyed by vermin, will produce at least two hundred and fifty chickens. The chickens will be fit to carry to market about Christmas, when poultry always bears a good price; so that by May-day, I cannot fail of having money enough to purchase a

new gown. Green—let me consider,—yes, green becomes my complexion best, and green it shall be. In this dress I will go to the fair, where all the young fellows will strive to have me for a partner; but I shall



perhaps refuse every one of them, and with an air of disdain toss from them. Transported with this triumphant thought, she could not forbear acting with her head what thus passed in her imagination, when down came the pail of milk, and all her imaginary happiness vanished like a dream.



It is extreme folly to ask advice of an interested adviser.

THE CORMORANT AND THE FISHES.

A Cormorant whose eyes were become so dim by age, that he could not discern his prey at the bottom of the waters, bethought himself of a stratagem to supply his wants. Hark you, friend, said he, to a Gudgeon whom he observed swimming near the surface of a certain canal, if you have any regard for yourself or your brethren, go this moment and acquaint them from me, that the owner of this piece of water is determined to drag it a week hence. The Gudgeon immediately swam away, and made his report of this terrible news to a general assembly of the fish: who unanimously agreed to send him back as their ambassador to the Cormorant. The purport of his commission was to return him their thanks for the intelligence; and to add their entreaties, that, as he had been so good as to inform them of their danger, he would be graciously pleased to put them into a method of escaping it. That I will, most readily, returned the artful Cormorant, and assist you with my best services into the bargain. You have only to collect yourselves together at the top of the water, and I will undertake to transport you safely one by one to my own residence, by the side of a solitary pool, to which no creature but myself ever found the way. The project was perfectly well approved by the unwary fish, and with great expedition executed by the deceitful Cormorant; who having placed them in a shallow water, the bottom of which his eye could easily discern, they were all devoured by him in their turns, as his hunger or his luxury required.

The injuries we do, and those we suffer, are seldom weighed in the same scales.

THE PARTIAL JUDGE.

A Farmer came to a neighboring Lawyer, expressing great concern for an accident which he said had just happened. One of your oxen, continued he, has been gored by an unlucky bull of mine, and I should be glad to know how I am to make you reparation. Thou art a very honest fellow, replied the Lawyer, and wilt not think it unreasonable that I expect one of thy oxen, in return. It is no more than justice, quoth the Farmer, to be sure; but what did I say?—I mistake—It is your bull that has killed one of my oxen. Indeed! says the Lawyer, that alters the case; I must inquire into the affair, and if—And if! said the Farmer—the business I find would have been concluded without an if, had you been as ready to do justice to others, as to exact it from them.



He who disputes the existence of a deity, will find himself confuted by every part of nature.

THE ATHEIST AND THE ACORN.

It was the fool who said in his heart, There is no God; into the breast of a wise man, such a thought could never have entered. One of those refined reasoners commonly called minute philosophers, was sitting at his ease beneath the shade of a large oak, while at his side the weak

branches of a pumpkin were trailed upon the ground. This put our great logician into his old train of reasoning against providence. Is it consistent with common sense, said he, that infinite wisdom should create so large and stately a tree, with branches of such prodigious strength, to bear so small and insignificant a fruit as an acorn? Or that so weak a stem as that of a pumpkin should be loaded with so disproportioned a weight? A child may see the absurdity of it. In the midst of this curious speculation, down dropped an acorn, from one of the highest branches of the oak, full upon his head. How small a trifle may overturn the systems of fallible men! Struck with the accident, he could not help crying out, How providential it is that this was not a pumpkin!

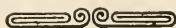


We should use the talents that are allotted, and are most suitable to our species, instead of disparaging those faculties that are as properly adapted to another.

THE LYNX AND THE MOLE.

Under the covert of a thick wood, at the foot of a tree, as a Lynx lay whetting his teeth, and waiting for his prey, he espied a Mole, concealed under a hillock of her own raising. Alas, poor creature, said the Lynx, how much I pity thee! Surely Jupiter has been very unkind, to debar thee from the light of the day, which rejoices the whole creation. Thou art certainly not above half alive; and it would be doing thee a service, to put an end to so unanimated a being. I thank you for your kindness, replied the Mole, but I think I have full as

much vivacity as my state and circumstances require. For the rest, I am perfectly well contented with the faculties which Jupiter has allotted me, who I am sure wants not our direction in distributing his gifts with propriety. I have not, 'tis true, your piercing eyes; but I have ears which answer all my purposes full as well. Hark! for example, I am warned, by a noise which I hear behind you, to fly from danger. So saying, he slunk into the earth, while a javelin from the arm of a hunter pierced this quick-sighted lynx to the heart.



The greatest genius with a vindictive temper is far surpassed in point of happiness by men of talents less considerable.

THE BEE AND THE FLY.

A Bee observing a Fly frisking about her hive, asked him in a very passionate tone, what he did there? Is it for such scoundrels as you, said he, to intrude into the company of the queens of the air? You have great reason, truly, replied the Fly, to be out of humor; I am sure they must be mad, who would have any concern with so quarrelsome a nation. And why so? thou saucy malapert, returned the enraged Bee; we have the best laws, and are governed by the best policy in the world. We feed upon the most fragrant flowers, and all our business is to make honey; honey, which equals nectar, thou unsavory wretch, who livest upon nothing but putrefaction and excrement. We live as we can, rejoined the Fly; poverty, I hope, is no crime; but passion is, I am sure.

The honey you make is sweet, grant you, but your heart is all bitterness; for to be revenged on an enemy, you'll destroy your own life; and are so inconsiderate in your rage, as to do more mischief to yourself than to your adversary. Take my word for it one had better have less considerable talents and use them with more discretion.



Intemperance is the great and original cause that generally shortens human life.

THE COURT OF DEATH.

Death, the king of terrors, on the anniversary of his coronation was determined to choose his prime minister. His pale courtiers, the ghastly train of diseases, were all summoned to attend, and each preferred his claim to the honor of this illustrious office. Fever urged the numbers he destroyed; cold Palsy set forth his pretensions, by shaking all his limbs; and Dropsy, by his swelled unwieldy carcass. Gout hobbled up, and alleged his great power in racking every joint; and Asthma's inability to speak, was a strong, though silent argument in favor of his claim. Stone and Colic pleaded their violence; Plague, his rapid progress in destruction; and Consumption, though slow, insisted that he was sure. In the midst of this contention, the court was disturbed with the noise of music, dancing, feasting and revelry; when immediately entered a lady, with a bold, lascivious air, and a flushed and jovial countenance; she was attended on one hand by a troop of cooks and bacchanals; and on the

other, by a train of wanton youths and damsels, who danced half naked to the softest musical instruments; her name was Intemperance. She waved her hand, and thus addressed the crowd of diseases: Give way, ye sickly band of pretenders, nor dare to vie with my superior merits in the service of this great monarch. Am not I your parent? the author of your beings? Do ye not derive your power of shortening human life, almost wholly from me? Who then so fit as I myself, for this important office? The grisly monarch grinned a smile of approbation, placed her at his right hand, and she immediately became his prime favorite, and principal minister.



There are few things which can be so irreparably lost as
reputation

GENIUS, VIRTUE, AND REPUTATION.

Genius, Virtue, and Reputation, three great friends, agreed to travel over the island of Great Britain, to see whatever might be worthy of observation. But as some misfortune, said they, may happen to separate us; let us consider before we set out, by what means we may find each other again. Should it be my ill fate, said Genius, to be severed from my friends, which heaven forbid! you may find me kneeling in devotion before the tomb of Shakespeare; or rapt in some grove where Milton talked with angels; or musing in the grotto where Pope caught inspiration. Virtue, with a sigh, acknowledged, that her friends were not very numerous; but were I to lose you, she cried, with whom I am at present so happily united;

I should choose to take sanctuary in the temples of religion, in the palaces of royalty, or in the stately domes of ministers of state; but as it may be my ill fortune to be there denied admittance, inquire for some cottage where contentment has a bower, and there you will certainly find me. Ah, my dear friends, said Reputation very earnestly, you, I perceive, when missing, may possibly be recovered; but take care, I entreat you, always to keep sight of me, for if I am once lost, I am never to be retrieved.

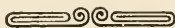


The means suggested by superstition to secure us from misfortune often bring it upon our heads.

THE NOBLEMAN AND HIS SON.

A certain Nobleman, much infected by superstition, dreamed one night that his only son, a youth about fifteen years of age, was thrown from his horse as he was hunting, and killed upon the spot. This idle dream made so strong an impression upon the weak and credulous father, that he formed a resolution never more to suffer his son to partake of this his favorite amusement. The next morning that the hounds went out, the young man requested permission to follow them; but instead of receiving it, as usual, his father acquainted him with his dream, and peremptorily enjoined him to forbear the sport. The youth, greatly mortified at this unexpected refusal, left the room much disconcerted, and it was with some difficulty that he restrained his passion from indecently breaking out in his father's presence. But upon his return to his own apartment, passing through a gal-

lery of pictures, in which was a piece representing a company of gypsies telling a country girl her fortune. 'Tis owing, said he, to a ridiculous superstition of the same kind with that of this simple wench, that I am debarred from one of the principal pleasures of my life; at the same time, with great emotion striking his hand against the canvas, a rusty old nail behind the picture, ran far into his wrist. The pain and anguish of the wound threw the youth into a violent fever, which proved too powerful for the skill of the physicians, and in a few days put an end to his life; illustrating an observation, that an over-cautious attention to avoid evils, often brings them upon us; and that we frequently run headlong into misfortunes by the very means we pursue to avoid them.



Our term of life does not allow time for long-protracted deliberation.

INDUSTRY AND SLOTH.

How many live in the world as useless as if they had never been born! They pass through life, like a bird through the air, and leave no track behind them; waste the prime of their days in deliberating what they shall do; and bring them to a period, without coming to any determination.

An indolent young man, being asked why he lay in bed so long, jocosely and carelessly answered: Every morning of my life I am hearing long causes. I have two fine girls, their names are Industry and Sloth, close at my bedside, as soon as ever I awake, pressing their dif-

ferent suits. One entreats me to get up, the other persuades me to lie still; and then they alternately give me various reasons, why I should rise, and why I should not. In the mean time, as it is the duty of an impartial judge to hear all that can be said on either side; before the pleadings are over, it is time to go to dinner.



We are no where out of the reach of Providence, either to punish or to protect us.

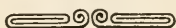
THE PASSENGER AND THE PILOT.

It had blown a violent storm at sea, and the whole crew of the vessel were in imminent danger of shipwreck. After the rolling of the waves was somewhat abated, a certain Passenger who had never been at sea before, observing the Pilot to have appeared wholly unconcerned even in their greatest danger, had the curiosity to ask him what death his father died. What death? said the Pilot: why he perished at sea, as my grandfather did before him. And are not you afraid of trusting yourself to an element that has proved thus fatal to your family? Afraid! by no means; why, we must all die; is not your father dead? Yes, but he died in his bed. And why then are you not afraid of trusting yourself to your bed? Because I am there perfectly secure. It may be so, replied the Pilot; but if the hand of providence is equally extended over all places, there is no more reason for me to be afraid of going to sea, than for you to be afraid of going to bed.

The random zeal of inconsiderate friends is often as hurtful as the wrath of enemies.

THE HERMIT AND THE BEAR.

A certain Hermit having done a good office to a Bear, the grateful creature was so sensible of his obligation, that he begged to be admitted as the guardian and companion of his solitude. The Hermit willingly accepted his offer; and conducting him to his cell, they passed their time together in an amicable manner. One very hot day, the Hermit having laid him down to sleep, the officious Bear employed himself in driving away the flies from his friend's face. But in spite of all his care, one of the flies perpetually returned to the attack, and at last settled upon the hermit's nose. Now I shall have you, most certainly, said the Bear; and with the best intentions imaginable, gave him a violent blow on the face, which very effectually indeed demolished the fly, but at the same time mangled in a most shocking manner his benefactor's face.



A prudent person will not only preserve his innocence, but will avoid the consequences of any seeming handle he may afford to his oppressor.

THE HARE'S EARS.

An Elk having accidentally gored a Lion, the monarch was so exasperated, that he sent forth an edict, commanding all horned beasts, on pain of death, to depart his dominions. A Hare observing the shadow of her ears,

was much alarmed at their long and lofty appearance; and running to one of her friends, acquainted him that she was resolved to quit the country. For should I happen, said she, however undesignedly, to give offence to my superiors, my ears may be construed to come within the horn-act. Her friend smiled at her apprehensions, and asked, how it was possible that ears could be mistaken for horns? Had I no more ears than an ostrich, replied the Hare, I would not trust them in the hands of an informer; for truth and innocence are arguments of little force, against the logic of power and malice in conjunction.



Were our ill-judged prayers to be always granted, how many would be ruined at their own request!

JUPITER AND THE HERDSMAN.

A Herdsman missed a young heifer out of his grounds, and, after having diligently sought for it in vain, when he could by no other means gain intelligence of it, betook himself at last to his prayers. Great Jupiter, said he, show me but the villain who has done me this injury, and I will give thee in sacrifice the finest kid from my flock. He had no sooner uttered his petition, than turning the corner of a wood, he was struck with the sight of a monstrous lion, preying on the carcass of his heifer. Trembling and pale, O Jupiter, cried he, I offered thee a kid if thou wouldst grant my petition; I now offer thee a bull, if thou wilt deliver me from the consequence of it.

The partiality of parents often makes themselves ridiculous, and their offspring unhappy

THE EAGLE AND THE OWL.

An Eagle and an Owl having entered into a league of mutual amity, one of the articles of their treaty was, that the former should not prey upon the younglings of the latter. But tell me, said the Owl, should you know my little ones if you were to see them? Indeed, I should not, replied the Eagle; but if you will describe them to me it will be sufficient. You are to observe then, returned the Owl, in the first place, that the charming creatures are perfectly well shaped; in the next, that there is a remarkable sweetness and vivacity in their countenances; and then there is something in their voices so peculiarly melodious. 'Tis enough, interrupted the Eagle; by these marks I cannot fail of distinguishing them, and you may depend upon their never receiving any injury from me. It happened not long afterwards, as the Eagle was upon the wing in quest of his prey, that he discovered amidst the ruins of an old castle, a nest of grim-faced, ugly birds, with gloomy countenances, and voices like those of the furies. These undoubtedly, said he, cannot be the offspring of my friend, and so I shall venture to make free with them. He had scarce finished his repast and departed, when the Owl returned; who finding nothing of her brood remaining but the mangled carcasses, broke out into the most bitter exclamations against the cruel and perfidious author of her calamity. A neighboring Bat, who overheard her lamentations, and had been witness to what had passed between her and the Eagle, very gravely told her, that she had nobody to blame for this

misfortune but herself, whose blind prejudices in favor of her children, had prompted her to give such a description of them, as did not resemble them in any one single feature or quality.

Parents should very carefully guard against that weak partiality towards their children, which renders them blind to their failings and imperfections, as no disposition is more likely to prove prejudicial to their future welfare.



It is common for men to wish others reduced to their own level; and we ought to guard against such advice as may proceed from this principle.

THE FOX THAT HAD LOST HIS TAIL.

A Fox having been unwarily caught in a trap, at length with much struggling and difficulty, disengaged himself; not, however, without being obliged to leave his tail behind him. The joy he felt at his escape, was somewhat abated when he began to consider the price he had paid for it, and he was a good deal mortified by reflecting on the ridiculous figure he should make among his brethren, without a tail. In the agitation of his thoughts upon this occasion, an expedient occurred to him which he resolved to try, in order to remove this disgraceful singularity.



With this view he assembled his tribe together, and set forth in a most elaborate speech, how much he had at heart whatever tended to the public weal; he had often thought, he said, on the length and bushiness of their tails; was verily persuaded that it was much more burdensome than ornamental, and rendered them besides an easier prey to their enemies. He earnestly recommended it to them, therefore, to discharge themselves of so useless and dangerous an encumbrance. My good friend, replied an old fox, who had listened very attentively to his harangue, we are much obliged to you, no doubt, for the concern you express upon our account, but pray turn about before the company, for I cannot for my life help suspecting, that you would not be quite so solicitous to ease us of our tails, if you had not unluckily lost your own.



The poor and helpless undergo punishments for small and trivial offenses which the rich and powerful escape, though guilty of crimes of a much blacker nature.

THE PLAGUE AMONG THE BEASTS.

A mortal distemper once raged among the Beasts, and swept away prodigious numbers. After it had continued some time without abatement, it was concluded in an assembly of the brute creation to be a judgment inflicted upon them for their sins, and a day was appointed for a general confession; when it was agreed, that he who appeared to be the greatest sinner, should suffer death, as an atonement for the rest. The Fox was appointed father confessor upon the occasion, and the Lion

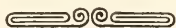
with great generosity condescended to be the first in making public confession. For my part, said he, I must own I have been an enormous offender; I have killed many innocent sheep in my time; nay once, but it was a case of necessity, I made a meal of the shepherd. The Fox, with much gravity, acknowledged that these in any other than the king would have been inexpressible crimes; but that his majesty had certainly a right to a few silly sheep, nay and to the shepherd, too, in a case of necessity. The judgment of the Fox was applauded by all the superior savages, and the Tiger, the Leopard, the Bear, and the Wolf, made confession of many enormities of the like sanguinary nature, which were all palliated or excused with the same lenity and mercy, and their crimes accounted so venial as scarce to deserve the name of offenses. At last, a poor penitent Ass, with great contrition acknowledged, that once going through the parson's meadow, being very hungry, and tempted by the sweetness of the grass, he had cropped a little of it, not more however in quantity than the tip of his tongue; he was very sorry for the misdemeanor, and hoped,—Hope, exclaimed the Fox with singular zeal, what canst thou hope for, after the commission of so heinous a crime? What! eat the parson's grass! O sacrilege! This, this is the flagrant wickedness, my brethren, which has drawn the wrath of heaven upon our heads, and this the notorious offender, whose death must make a propitiation for all our transgressions. So saying, he ordered his entrails for sacrifice, and the rest of the beasts went to dinner upon his carcass.

If we trust merely to outward appearances we shall often err in distinguishing betwixt our enemies and our friends.

THE CAT, THE COCK, AND THE YOUNG MOUSE.

A young Mouse, who had seen very little of the world, came running one day to his mother in great haste. O, mother, said he, I am frightened almost to death! I have seen the most extraordinary creature that ever was. He has a fierce angry look, and struts about upon two legs. A strange piece of flesh grows upon his head, and another under his throat, as red as blood. He flapped his arms against his sides, as if he intended to rise into the air, and stretching out his head, he opened a sharp-pointed mouth so wide, that I thought he was preparing to swallow me up; then he roared at me so horribly, that I trembled in every joint, and was glad to run home as fast as I could. If I had not been frightened away by this terrible monster, I was just going to scrape acquaintance with the prettiest creature you ever saw. She had a soft fur skin, thicker than ours, and all beautifully waved with black and gray; with a modest look, and a demeanor so humble and courteous that methought I could have fallen in love with her. Then she had a fine long tail, which she waved about so prettily, and looked so earnestly at me, that I do believe she was just going to speak to me, when the horrid monster frightened me away. Ah, my dear child, said the mother; you have indeed escaped being devoured but not by that monster you were so much afraid of, which in truth was only a bird, and would have done you no manner of harm. Whereas the

sweet creature, of whom you seem so fond, was no other than a cat; who, under that hypocritical countenance, conceals the most inveterate hatred to all our race, and subsists entirely by devouring mice. Learn from this incident, my dear, never while you live to rely on outward appearances.



Schemes of ambition, without proper talent, always terminate in disgrace.

THE CONCEITED OWL.

A young Owl having accidentally seen himself in a crystal fountain, conceived the highest opinion of his personal perfections. It is time, said he, that Hymen should give me children as beautiful as myself, to be the glory of the night, and the ornament of our groves. What pity would it be, if the race of the most accomplished of birds should be extinct for my want of a mate! Happy the female who is destined to spend her life with me! Full of these self-approving thoughts, he entreated the Crow to propose a match between him and the royal daughter of the Eagle. Do you imagine, said the Crow, that the noble Eagle, whose pride it is to gaze on the brightest of the heavenly luminaries, will consent to marry his daughter to you, who cannot so much as open your eyes whilst it is day-light? But the self-conceited Owl was deaf to all that his friend could urge; who after much persuasion, was at length prevailed upon to undertake the commission. His proposal was received in the manner that might be expected: the king of birds laughed him to scorn. However, being a monarch of some

humor, he ordered him to acquaint the Owl, that if he would meet him the next morning at sunrise in the middle of the sky, he would consent to give him his daughter in marriage. The presumptuous Owl undertook to perform the condition; but being dazzled with the sun, and his head growing giddy, he fell from his height upon a rock; from whence being pursued by a flight of birds, he was glad at last to make his escape into the hollow of an old oak, where he passed the remainder of his days in that obscurity for which nature designed him.



Men who meditate mischief suggest the same to others;
and generally pay dear for their forward gratification.

THE SICK LION, THE FOX, AND THE WOLF.

A Lion, having surfeited himself with feasting too luxuriously on the carcass of a wild boar, was seized with a violent and dangerous disorder. The beasts of the forest flocked in great numbers to pay their respects to him upon the occasion, and scarce one was absent except the Fox. The Wolf, an ill-natured and malicious beast, seized this opportunity to accuse the Fox of pride, ingratitude and disaffection to his majesty. In the midst of his invective, the Fox entered; who having heard part of the Wolf's accusation, and observing the Lion's countenance to be kindling into wrath, thus adroitly excused himself and retorted upon his accuser. With a tone of zealous loyalty he addressed the assembly thus: May the king live forever! Then turning to the Lion—I see many here, who with mere lip service have pretended to show you

their loyalty; but for my part, from the moment I heard of your majesty's illness, neglecting useless compliments, I employed myself day and night to inquire among the most learned physicians, an infallible remedy for your disease, and have at length happily been informed of one. It is a plaster made from part of the skin of a Wolf,



taken warm from his back, and laid to your majesty's stomach. This remedy was no sooner proposed, than it was determined that the experiment should be tried, and whilst the operation was performing, the Fox, with a sarcastic smile, whispered this useful maxim in the Wolf's ear : If you would be safe from harm yourself, learn for the future not to meditate mischief against others.

Men expostulate to little purpose when their own example
confutes their argument.

THE GNAT AND THE BEE.

A Gnat half starved with cold and pinched with hunger, came early one morning to a bee-hive, begged the relief of charity, and offered to teach music in the family, on the humble terms of diet and lodging. The Bee received her petitioner with a cold civility, and desired to be excused. I bring up all my children, said she, to my own useful trade, that they may be able when they grow up, to get an honest livelihood by their industry. Besides, how do you think I could be so imprudent as to teach them an art, which I see has reduced its professor to indigence and beggary?



It is often more prudent to suppress our sentiments than
either to flatter, or to rail.

THE LION, THE BEAR, AND THE FOX.

The tyrant of the forest issued a proclamation, commanding all his subjects to repair immediately to his royal den. Among the rest, the Bear made his appearance; but pretending to be offended with the steams which issued from the monarch's apartments, he was imprudent enough to hold his nose in his majesty's presence. This insolence was so highly resented, that the Lion in a rage laid him dead at his feet. The Monkey, observing what had passed, trembled for his carcass, and attempted to

conciliate favor by the most abject flattery. He began with protesting, that for his part, he thought the apartments were perfumed with Arabian spices, and exclaiming against the rudeness of the Bear, admired the beauty of his majesty's paws, so happily formed, he said, to correct the insolence of clowns. This fulsome adulation, instead of being received as he expected, proved no less offensive than the rudeness of the Bear, and the courtly Monkey was in like manner extended by the side of Sir Bruin. And now his majesty cast his eye upon the Fox. Well, Reynard, said he, and what scent do you discover here? Great prince, replied the cautious Fox, my nose was never esteemed my most distinguishing sense, and at present I would by no means venture to give my opinion, as I have unfortunately got a terrible cold.

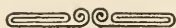


It is natural for a pedant to despise those arts which polish our manners, and would extirpate pedantry.

THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE.

A formal solemn Owl had many years made his habitation in a grove amongst the ruins of an old monastery, and had pored so often over some mouldy manuscripts, the stupid relics of a monkish library, that he grew infected with the pride and pedantry of the place, and mistaking gravity for wisdom, would sit whole days with his eyes half shut, fancying himself profoundly learned. It happened as he sat one evening, half buried in meditation, and half in sleep, that a Nightingale, unluckily perching near him, began her melodious lays. He started

from his reverie, and with a horrid screech interrupting her song;—Be gone, cried he, thou impertinent minstrel, nor distract with noisy dissonance my sublime contemplations; and know, vain songster, that harmony consists in truth alone, which is gained by laborious study; and not in languishing notes, fit only to soothe the ear of a love-sick maid. Conceited pedant, returned the Nightingale, whose wisdom lies only in the feathers that muffle up thy unmeaning face; music is a natural and rational entertainment, and though not adapted to the ears of an Owl, has ever been relished and admired by the best formed minds.



Narrow minds think the system of the universe should have been contrived to suit themselves alone.

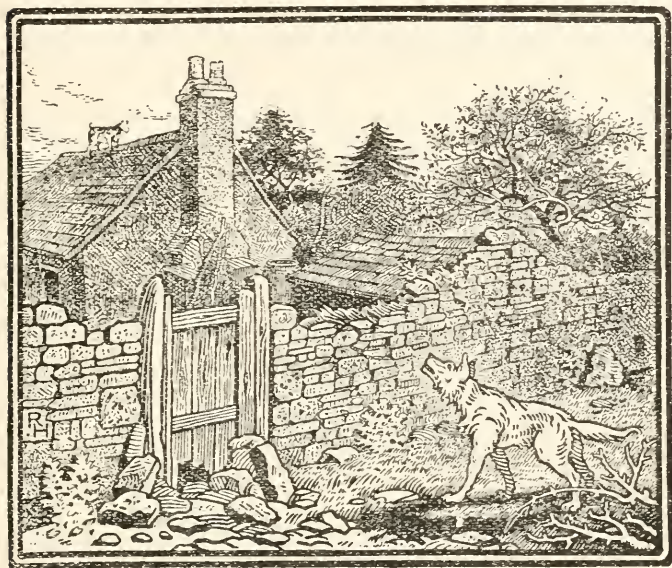
THE OWL AND THE EAGLE.

An Owl sat blinking in the trunk of a hollow tree, and arraigned the brightness of the sun. What is the use of its beams, said she, but to dazzle one's eyes so that one cannot see a mouse. For my part, I am at a loss to conceive for what purpose so glaring an object was created. We had certainly been much better without it. O fool! replied an Eagle, who was perched on a branch of the same tree, to rail at excellence which thou canst not taste, and not to perceive that the fault is not in the sun, but in thyself. All, it is true, have not faculties to understand, or powers to enjoy the benefits of it; but must the business and the pleasures of the world be obstructed, that an owl may catch mice?

It is easy to be brave from a safe distance.

THE WOLF AND THE KID.

A Kid was perched up on the top of a house, and looking down saw a Wolf passing under him. Immediately he began to revile and attack his enemy. Mur-



derer and thief, he cried, what do you here near honest folks' houses? How dare you make an appearance where your vile deeds are known?

Curse away, my young friend, said the Wolf.

The wants and weaknesses of individuals form the connections of society

THE BLIND MAN AND THE LAME.

A Blind Man being stopped in a bad piece of road, meets with a Lame Man, and entreats him to guide him through the difficulty he was got into. How can I do that, replied the Lame Man, since I am scarce able to drag myself along? but as you appear to be very strong, if you will carry me, we will seek our fortunes together. It will then be my interest to warn you of anything that may obstruct your way; your feet shall be my feet, and my eyes yours. With all my heart, returned the Blind Man; let us render each other our mutual services. So taking his lame companion on his back, they by means of their union traveled on with safety and pleasure.



The greater room there appears for resentment, the more careful should we be not to accuse an innocent person.

THE FARMER AND HIS DOG.

A Farmer who had just stepped into his field to mend a gap in one of his fences, found at his return, the cradle where he had left his only child asleep, turned upside down, the clothes all torn and bloody, and his Dog lying near it besmeared also with blood. Immediately conceiving that the creature had destroyed his child, he

instantly dashed out his brains with the hatchet in his hand, when turning up the cradle, he found his child unhurt, and an enormous serpent lying dead on the floor, killed by that faithful Dog, whose courage and fidelity in preserving the life of his son, deserved another kind of reward; these affecting circumstances afforded him a striking lesson, how dangerous it is too hastily to give way to the blind impulse of a sudden passion.



Boys of no very promising appearance often make the greatest men.

THE ANT AND THE CATERPILLAR.

As a Caterpillar was creeping very slowly along one of the alleys of a beautiful garden, he was met by a pert lively Ant, who, tossing up her head with a scornful air, cried: Prithee get out of the way, thou poor creeping animal, and do not presume to obstruct the paths of thy superiors, by crawling along the road, and besmearing the walks appropriated to their footsteps. Poor creature! thou lookest like a thing half made, which nature not liking threw by unfinished. I could almost pity thee, methinks, but it is beneath one of my quality to talk to such little mean creatures as thee; and so, poor, creeping wretch, adieu.

The humble Caterpillar, struck dumb with this disdainful language, retired, went to work, wound himself up in a silken cell, and at the appointed time came out a beautiful butterfly. Just as he was issuing forth, he observed the scornful Ant passing by. Stop a moment, madam,

said he, and listen to what I shall say. Let me advise you never to despise any one for his condition, as there are none so mean but they may one day change their fortune. You behold me now exalted in the air, whereas you must creep as long as you live.



The most important acts of gratitude are often performed by the most unlikely instruments.

THE DOVE AND THE ANTS.

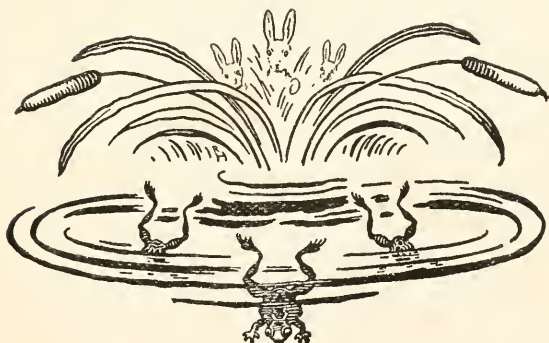
We should always be ready to do good offices, even to the meanest of our fellow creatures, as there is no one to whose assistance we may not, upon some occasion or other, be greatly indebted.

A Dove was sipping from the banks of a rivulet, when an Ant, who was at the same time trailing a grain of corn along the edge of the brook, inadvertently fell in. The Dove observing the helpless insect struggling in vain to reach the shore, was touched with compassion, and plucking a blade of grass, dropped it into the stream; by means of which the poor Ant, like a ship-wrecked sailor upon a plank, got safe to land. She had scarcely arrived there, when she perceived a fowler just going to discharge his piece at her deliverer; upon which she instantly crept up his foot and stung him on the ankle. The sportsman starting, occasioned a rustling among the boughs, which alarmed the Dove, who immediately sprung up, and by that means escaped the danger with which she was threatened.

There is always some one worse off than ourselves.

THE HARES AND THE FROGS.

The Hares were so persecuted by the other beasts they did not know where to go. As soon as they saw a single animal approach them, off they used to run. One day they saw a troop of wild Horses stampeding about, and in quite a panic all the Hares scuttled off to a lake hard by, determined to drown themselves rather than live in such a continual state of fear. But just as they got near the bank of the lake, a troop of Frogs, frightened in their turn by the approach of the Hares, scuttled off, and jumped into the water. Truly, said one of the Hares, things are not so bad as they seem.



The superior safety of an obscure and humble station is a balance for the honors of a high and envied life.

THE TWO LIZARDS.

As two Lizards were basking under a south wall, how contemptible, said one of them, is our condition! We exist, it is true, but that is all, for we hold no sort of rank in the creation, and are utterly unnoticed by the world. Cursed obscurity! Why was I not rather born a Stag, to range at large, the pride and glory of some royal forest? It happened that in the midst of these unjust murmurs, a pack of Hounds was heart in full cry after the very creature he was envying, who being quite spent with the chase, was torn in pieces by the dogs in sight of our two Lizards. And is this the lordly Stag, whose place in the creation you wished to hold? replied the wiser Lizard to his complaining friend. Let his sad fate teach you to bless providence for placing you in that humbler situation, which secures you from the dangers of a more elevated rank.



The object of our pride is often the cause of our misfortune.

THE TWO HORSES.

Two Horses were traveling the road together, one loaded with a sack of flour, the other with a sum of money. The latter, proud of his splendid burden, tossed his head with an air of conscious superiority, and every now and then cast a look of contempt upon his humble compan-

ion. In passing through a wood, they were met by a gang of highwaymen, who immediately seized upon the horse that was carrying the treasure; but the spirited steed, not being altogether disposed to stand so quietly as was necessary for their purpose, they beat him most unmercifully, and after plundering him of his boasted load, left him to lament at his leisure the cruel wounds he had received. Friend, said his despised companion to him, who had now reason to triumph in his turn, distinguished posts are often dangerous to those who possess them; if you had served a miller, as I do, you might have traveled the road unmolested.



We should ever guard against those vices that are chiefly incident to our time of life: excess and riot, while we are young, and egregious parsimony, as we grow in years.

THE TWO FOXES.

Two Foxes formed a stratagem to enter a hen roost, which having successfully executed, and killed the cock, the hens and the chickens, they began to feed upon them with singular satisfaction. One of the Foxes, who was young and inconsiderate, was for devouring them all upon the spot; the other, who was old and covetous, proposed the reserving some of them for another time. For experience, child, said he, has made me wise, and I have seen many unexpected events since I came into the world. Let us provide, therefore, against what may happen, and not consume all our store at one meal. All this is wondrous wise, replied the young Fox, but for my part, I am resolved not to stir till I have eaten as much as will serve

me a whole week; for who would be mad enough to return hither? It is certain the owner of these fowls will watch for us, and if he should catch us, would infallibly put us to death. After this short discourse, each pursued his own fancy: the young Fox ate till he burst himself, and had scarcely strength to reach his hole before he died. The old one, who thought it much better to deny his appetite for the present, and lay up provision for the future, returned the next day, and was killed by the farmer. Thus every age has its peculiar vice: the young suffer by their insatiable thirst after pleasure, and the old, by their incorrigible and inordinate avarice.



Persons may write fine systems of morality who never practiced a single virtue.

THE FOX AND THE CAT.

Nothing is more common than for men to condemn the very same actions in others, which they practice themselves whenever occasion offers.

A Fox and a Cat having made a party to travel together, beguiled the tediousness of their journey by a variety of philosophical conversations. Of all the moral virtues, exclaimed Reynard, mercy is sure the noblest! What say you, my sage friend, is it not so? Undoubtedly, replied the Cat, with a most demure countenance; nothing is more becoming, in a creature of any sensibility, than a compassionate disposition. While they were thus philosophizing, and mutually complimenting each other on the wisdom of their respective reflections, a Wolf darted out from a wood upon a flock of Sheep

which were feeding in an adjacent meadow, and without being the least affected by the moving lamentations of a poor Lamb, devoured it before their eyes. Horrible cruelty! exclaimed the Cat; why does he not feed on vermin, instead of making his barbarous meals on such innocent creatures? Reynard agreed with his friend in the observation, to which he added several very pathetic remarks on the odiousness of a sanguinary temper. Their indignation was rising in its warmth and zeal, when they arrived at a little cottage by the wayside, where the tender-hearted Reynard immediately cast his eye upon a fine Cock that was strutting about in the yard. And now adieu moralizing: he leaped over the pales, and without any sort of scruple demolished his prize in an instant. In the meanwhile, a plump Rat which ran out of the stable, totally put to flight our Cat's philosophy, who fell to the repast without the least commiseration.



Ridicule appears with a very ill grace in persons who possess no one talent beside.

THE MOCKING-BIRD.

There is a certain bird in the West Indies, which has the faculty of mimicing the notes of every other songster, without being able himself to add any original strains to the concert. As one of these Mocking-birds was displaying his talent of ridicule among the branches of a venerable wood: It is very well, said a little songster, speaking in the name of all the rest, we grant you that our music is not without its faults, but why will you not favor us with a strain of your own?

Nothing escapes the eye of the master.

THE HART IN THE OX-STALL.

A Hart hotly pursued by the hounds fled for refuge into an ox-stall, and buried itself in a truss of hay, leaving nothing to be seen but the tips of his horns. Soon after the Hunters came up and asked if any one had seen the Hart. The stable boys, who had been resting after their dinner, looked round, but could see nothing, and the



Hunters went away. Shortly afterwards the master came in, and looking round, saw that something unusual had taken place. He pointed to the truss of hay and said: What are those two curious things sticking out of the hay? And when the stable boys came to look they discovered the Hart, and soon made an end of him. He thus learnt that the servant's eye is not so keen as that of the master.

Mutual compliances are necessary to matrimonial happiness.

THE HOUNDS IN COUPLES.

A Huntsman was leading forth his Hounds one morning to the chase, and had linked several of the young dogs in Couples, to prevent their following every scent, and hunting disorderly, as their own inclinations and fancy should direct them. Among others, it was the fate of Jowler and Vixen to be thus yoked together. Jowler and Vixen were both young and inexperienced, but had for some time been constant companions, and seemed to have entertained a great fondness for each other; they used to be perpetually playing together, and in any quarrel that happened, always took one another's part; it might have been expected therefore that it would not be disagreeable to them to be still more closely united. However in fact it proved otherwise; they had not been long joined together before both parties began to express uneasiness at their present situation. Different inclinations and opposite wills began to discover and to exert themselves: if one chose to go this way, the other was as eager to take the contrary; if one was pressing forward, the other was sure to lag behind; Vixen pulled back Jowler, and Jowler dragged along Vixen; Jowler growled at Vixen, and Vixen snapped at Jowler, till at last it came to a downright quarrel between them; and Jowler treated Vixen in a very rough and ungenerous manner, without any regard to the inferiority of her strength, or the tenderness of her sex. As they were thus continually vexing and tormenting one another, an old hound, who had observed all that passed, came up to them, and thus reproved

them: What a couple of silly puppies you are, to be perpetually worrying yourselves at this rate! What hinders your going on peaceably and quietly together? Cannot you compromise the matter between you by each consulting the other's inclination a little! at least, try to make a virtue of necessity, and submit to what you cannot remedy; you cannot get rid of the chain, but you may make it fit easy upon you. I am an old dog, and let my age and experience instruct you; when I was in the same circumstances with you, I soon found that thwarting my companion was only tormenting myself; and my yoke-fellow happily came into the same way of thinking. We endeavored to join in the same pursuits, and to follow one another's inclinations, and so we jogged on together, not only with ease and quiet, but with comfort and pleasure. We found by experience, that mutual compliance not only compensates for liberty, but is even attended with a satisfaction and delight, beyond what liberty itself can give.



The pleasures of parental fondness make large amends
for all its anxieties.

THE OSTRICH AND THE PELICAN.

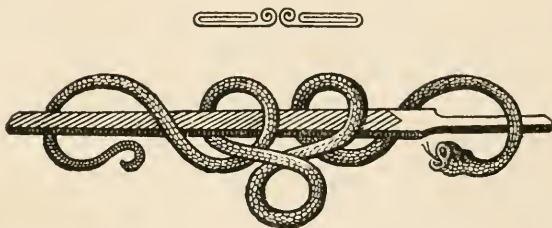
The Ostrich one day met the Pelican, and observing her breast all bloody, Good God! says she to her, what is the matter? What accident has befallen you? You certainly have been seized by some savage beast of prey, and have with difficulty escaped from his merciless claws. Do not be surprised, friend, replied the Pelican; no such accident, nor indeed anything more than common, hath

happened to me. I have only been engaged in my ordinary employment of tending my nest, of feeding my dear little ones, and nourishing them with the vital blood from my bosom. Your answer, returned the Ostrich, astonishes me still more than the horrid figure you make. What, is this your practice, to tear your own flesh, to spill your own blood, and to sacrifice yourself in this cruel manner to the importunate cravings of your young ones? I know not which to pity most, your misery or your folly. Be advised by me: have some regard for yourself, and leave off this barbarous custom of mangling your own body; as for your children, commit them to the care of providence, and make yourself quite easy about them. My example may be of use to you. I lay my eggs upon the ground, and just cover them lightly over with sand; if they have the good luck to escape being crushed by the tread of man or beast, the warmth of the sun broods upon, and hatches them, and in due time my young ones come forth; I leave them to be nursed by nature, and fostered by the elements; I give myself no trouble about them, and I neither know nor care what becomes of them. Unhappy wretch, says the Pelican, who hardenest thyself against thy own offspring, and through want of natural affection renderest thy travail fruitless to thyself! who knowest not the sweets of a parent's anxiety; the tender delights of a mother's sufferings! It is not I, but thou, that art cruel to thy own flesh. Thy insensibility may exempt thee from a temporary inconvenience, and an inconsiderable pain, but at the same time it makes thee inattentive to a most necessary duty, and incapable of relishing the pleasure that attends it; a pleasure, the most exquisite that nature hath indulged to us; in which pain itself is swallowed up and lost, or only serves to heighten the enjoyment.

We often miss our point by dividing our attention.

THE SNIPE SHOOTER.

As a Sportsman ranged the fields with his gun, attended by an experienced old Spaniel, he happened to spring a Snipe; and, nearly at the same instant, a covey of Partridges. Surprised at the accident, and divided in his aim, he let fly too indeterminately, and by this means missed them both. Ah, my good master, said the Spaniel, you should never have two aims at once. Had you not been dazzled and seduced by the extravagant hope of Partridge, you would most probably have secured your Snipe.



It is useless attacking the insensible.

THE SERPENT AND THE FILE.

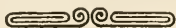
A Serpent in the course of its wanderings came into an armourer's shop. As he glided over the floor he felt his skin pricked by a file lying there. In a rage he turned round upon it and tried to dart his fangs into it; but he could do no harm to heavy iron and had soon to give over his wrath.



To be set in a strong point of light is as favorable to merit as it is destructive to imposture.

THE DIAMOND AND THE GLOW-WORM.

A Diamond happened to fall from the solitaire of a young lady as she was walking one evening on a terrace in her garden. A Glow-worm who had beheld it sparkle in its descent, soon as the gloom of night had eclipsed its luster began to mock and to insult it. Art thou that wondrous thing that vaunteth of such prodigious brightness? Where now is all thy boasted brilliancy? Alas, in an evil hour has fortune thrown thee within the reach of my superior blaze. Conceited insect, replied the gem, that oweth thy feeble glimmer to the darkness that surrounds thee; know, that my luster bears the test of day, and even derives its chief advantage from that distinguishing light, which discovers thee to be no more than a dark and paltry worm.



Gravity, though sometimes the men of wisdom, is often found to be the mask of ignorance.

THE PARROT.

A certain Widower, in order to amuse his solitary hours, and in some measure supply the conversation of his departed helpmate of loquacious memory, determined to purchase a Parrot. With this view he applied to a dealer in birds, who showed him a large collection of parrots of various kinds. While they were exercising their talkative

talents before him, one repeating the cries of the town, another asking for a cup of sack, and a third bawling out for a coach, he observed a green Parrot, perched in a thoughtful manner at a distance upon the foot of a table: And so you, my grave gentleman, said he, are quite silent. To which the Parrot replied, like a philosophical bird, I think the more. Pleased with this sensible answer, our Widower immediately paid down his price, and took home the bird; conceiving great things from a creature, who had given so striking a specimen of his parts. But after having instructed him during a whole month, he found to his great disappointment, that he could get nothing more from him than the fatiguing repetition of the same dull sentence, I think the more. I find, said he in great wrath, that thou art a most invincible fool, and ten times more a fool was I, for having formed a favorable opinion of thy abilities upon no better foundation than an affected solemnity.



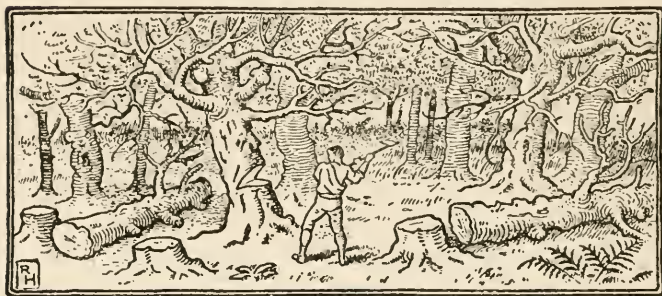
Inclination seems to have got the start of duty, when we seek to find it in books of casuistry.

THE CAT AND THE BAT.

A Cat having devoured a favorite Bullfinch of her master's, overheard him threatening to put her to death the moment he could find her. In this distress she preferred a prayer to Jupiter, vowing, if he would deliver her from her present danger, that never while she lived would she eat another bird. Not long afterwards a Bat most invitingly flew into the room where puss was purring in the window. The question was, how to act upon so tempting

an occasion? Her appetite pressed hard on one side, and her vow threw some scruples in her way on the other. At length she hit upon a most convenient distinction to remove all difficulties, by determining that as a bird indeed it was an unlawful prize, but as a mouse she might very conscientiously eat it, and accordingly without further debate fell to the repast.

Thus it is that men are apt to impose upon themselves by vain and groundless distinctions, when conscience and principle are at variance with interest and inclination.

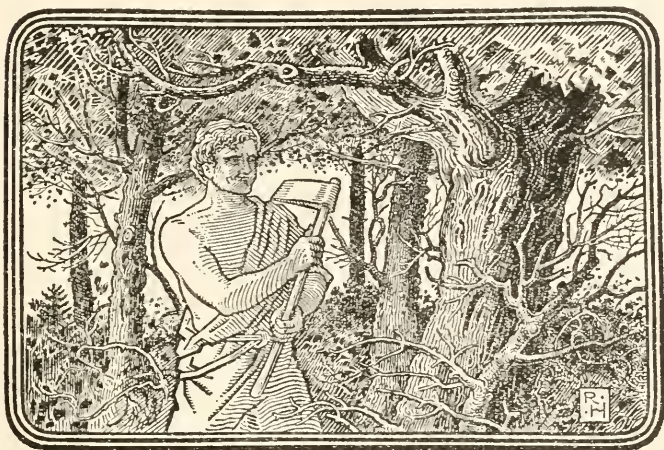


The folly of supplying to others the means of our own destruction.

THE MAN AND THE WOOD.

A Man came into a Wood one day with an axe in his hand, and begged all the Trees to give him a small branch which he wanted for a particular purpose. The Trees were good-natured and gave him one of their

branches. What did the Man do but fix it into the axe-head, and soon set to work cutting down tree after tree. Then the Trees saw how foolish they had been in giving their enemy the means of destroying themselves.

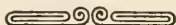


folly, passing with men for wisdom, makes each contented with his own share of understanding.

JUPITER'S LOTTERY.

Jupiter, in order to please mankind, directed Mercury to give notice that he had established a lottery, in which there were no blanks; and that amongst a variety of other valuable chances, wisdom was the highest prize. It was Jupiter's command that in this lottery some of the gods should also become adventurers. The tickets being dis-

posed of, and the wheels placed, Mercury was employed to preside at the drawing. It happened that the best prize fell to Minerva, upon which a general murmur ran through the assembly, and hints were thrown out that Jupiter had used some unfair practices to secure this desirable lot to his daughter. Jupiter, that he might at once punish and silence these impious clamors of the human race, presented them with folly in the place of wisdom; with which they went away perfectly well contented, and from that time the greatest fools have always looked upon themselves as the wisest men.



The scales of Justice are seldom poised until there is little or nothing remaining in either.

THE LITIGIOUS CATS.

Two Cats having stolen some cheese, could not agree about dividing their prize. In order therefore to settle the dispute, they consented to refer the matter to a Monkey. The proposed arbitrator very readily accepted the office, and producing a balance, put a part into each scale. Let me see (said he), ay, this lump outweighs the other; and immediately bit off a considerable piece in order to reduce it, he observed, to an equilibrium. The opposite scale was now become the heaviest, which afforded our conscientious judge an additional reason for a second mouthful. Hold, hold, said the two Cats, who began to be alarmed for the event, give us our respective shares, and we are satisfied. If you are satisfied, returned the Monkey, justice is not; a case of this intricate nature is by

no means so soon determined. Upon which he continued to nibble first one piece and then the other, till the poor Cats, seeing their cheese gradually diminishing, entreated him to give himself no farther trouble, but to deliver to them what remained. Not so fast, I beseech ye, friends, replied the Monkey; we owe justice to ourselves as well as to you; what remains is due to me in right of my office. Upon which, he stuffed the whole into his mouth, and with great gravity dismissed the court.



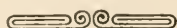
Our own moderation will not secure us from disturbance
if we connect ourselves with men of turbulent
and litigious dispositions.

THE TWO DOGS.

Hasty and inconsiderate connections are generally attended with great disadvantages, and much of every man's good or ill fortune depends upon the choice he makes of his friends.

A good-natured Spaniel overtook a surly Mastiff, as he was traveling upon the high road. Tray, although an entire stranger to Tiger, very civilly accosted him: And if it would be no interruption, he said, he should be glad to bear him company on his way. Tiger, who happened not to be altogether in so growling a mood as usual, accepted the proposal; and they very amicably pursued their journey together. In the midst of their conversation they arrived at the next village, where Tiger began to display his malignant disposition, by an unprovoked attack upon every dog he met. The villagers immediately sallied

forth with great indignation to rescue their respective favorites, and falling upon our two friends without distinction or mercy, poor Tray was most cruelly treated, for no other reason but from being found in bad company.



Our opinions of things are altogether as various as though each saw them through a different medium; our attachments to these opinions as fixed and firm as though all saw them through the medium of truth.

THE SPECTACLES.

Jupiter one day, enjoying himself over a bowl of nectar, and in a merry humor, determined to make mankind a present. Momus was appointed to convey it to them; who mounted on a rapid car, was presently on earth. Come hither, says he, ye happy mortals, great Jupiter has opened for your benefit his all-gracious hands. It is true, he made you somewhat short-sighted, but to remedy that inconvenience, behold how he has favored you! So saying, he unloosed his portmanteau; an infinite number of spectacles tumbled out, and mankind picked them up with great eagerness. There was enough for all, every man had his pair. But it was soon found that these spectacles did not represent objects to all mankind alike, for one pair was purple, another blue; one was white, and another black; some of the glasses were red, some green, and some yellow. In short, there were of all manner of colors, and every shade of color. However, notwithstanding this diversity, every man was charmed with his own, as believing it the best, and enjoyed in opinion, all the satisfaction of truth.



Outside show is a poor substitute for inner worth.

THE FOX AND THE MASK.

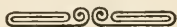
A Fox had by some means got into the store-room of a theater. Suddenly he observed a face glaring down on him, and began to be very frightened; but looking more closely he found it was only a Mask, such as actors use to put over their face. Ah, said the Fox, you look very fine; it is a pity you have not got any brains.



Men are seldom found to condemn themselves, otherwise than by the censures they pass upon their own faults, in other people.

THE MISER AND THE MAGPIE.

As a Miser sat at his desk, counting over his heaps of gold, a Magpie, eloping from his cage, picked up a guinea, and hopped away with it. The Miser, who never failed to count his money over a second time, immediately missed the piece, and rising up from his seat in the utmost consternation, observed the felon hiding it in a crevice of the floor. And art thou, cried he, that worst of thieves, who hast robbed me of my gold, without the plea of necessity, and without regard to its proper use? But thy life shall atone for so preposterous a villainy. Soft words, good master, quoth the Magpie. Have I then injured you, in any other sense than you defraud the public? And am I not using your money in the same manner you do yourself? If I must lose my life for hiding a single guinea, what do you, I pray, deserve, who secrete so many thousands?



A liar will not be believed, even when he speaks the truth.

THE SHEPHERD'S BOY.

There was once a young Shepherd Boy who tended his sheep at the foot of a mountain near a dark forest. It was rather lonely for him all day, so he thought upon a plan by which he could get a little company and some excitement. He rushed down towards the village calling

out Wolf, Wolf, and the villagers came out to meet him, and some of them stopped with him for a considerable time. This pleased the boy so much that a few days afterwards he tried the same trick, and again the villagers came to his help. But shortly after this a Wolf actually did come out from the forest, and began to worry the sheep, and the boy of course cried out Wolf, Wolf, still louder than before. But this time the villagers, who had been fooled twice before, thought the boy was again deceiving them, and nobody stirred to come to his help. So the Wolf made a good meal off the boy's flock, and when the boy complained, the wise man of the village said: It is your own fault if, after so often taking your lie for a truth we at last took your truth for a lie.



The advantages of moderation, and extreme folly of intemperance.

THE TWO BEES.

On a fine morning in May, two Bees set forward in quest of honey; the one wise and temperate, the other careless and extravagant. They soon arrived at a garden enriched with aromatic herbs, the most fragrant flowers, and the most delicious fruits. They regaled themselves for a time on the various dainties that were spread before them: the one loading his thigh at intervals with provisions for the hive against the distant winter; the other, revelling in sweets without regard to anything but his present gratification. At length they found a wide-mouthed phial, that hung beneath the bough of a peach-tree, filled with honey ready tempered, and exposed to their taste in the most alluring manner. The thoughtless epicure, spite of all his friend's remonstrances, plunged headlong into the vessel, resolving to indulge himself in all the pleasures of sensuality. The Philosopher, on the other hand, sipped a little with caution, but being suspicious of danger, flew off to fruits and flowers; where by the moderation of his meals, he improved his relish for the true enjoyment of them. In the evening, however, he called upon his friend, to inquire whether he would return to the hive; but found him surfeited in sweets, which he was as unable to leave, as to enjoy. Clogged in his wings, enfeebled in his feet, and his whole frame totally enervated, he was but just able to bid his friend adieu, and to lament with his last breath, that though a taste of pleasure might quicken the relish of life, an unrestrained indulgence is inevitable destruction.

The suggestions of vanity are as delusive as those of superstition.

THE POET AND THE DEATH-WATCH.

As a Poet sat in his closet, feasting his imagination on the hopes of fame and immortality, he was startled on a sudden with the ominous sound of a Death-watch. However, immediately recollecting himself; Vain insect, said he, cease thy impertinent forebodings, sufficient indeed to frighten the weakness of women or of children, but far beneath the notice of a Poet and Philosopher. As for me, whatever accident may threaten my life, my fame, spite of thy prognostics, shall live to future ages. May be so, replied the insect, I find at least, thou hadst rather listen to the maggot in thy head, than to the worm beneath thy table; but know, that the suggestions of vanity are altogether as deceitful as those of superstition.



The young should not act as though they were exempt from death; nor the old forget to guard against the follies of love.

DEATH AND CUPID.

Jupiter sent forth Death and Cupid to travel round the world, giving each of them a bow in his hand, and a quiver of arrows at his back. It was ordered by the disposer of human affairs that the arrows of Love should only wound the young, in order to supply the decays of mortal

men, and those of Death were to strike old age, and free the world from a useless charge. Our travelers being one day extremely fatigued with their journey, rested themselves under the covert of a wood, and throwing down their arrows in a promiscuous manner before them, they both fell fast asleep. They had not reposed themselves long, before they were awakened by a sudden noise, when hastily gathering up their arms, each in the confusion took by mistake some of the darts that belonged to the other. By this means, it frequently happened that Death vanquished the young, and Cupid subdued the old. Jupiter observed the error, but did not think proper to redress it, foreseeing that some good might arise from their unlucky exchange. And in fact, if men were wise, they would learn from this mistake to be apprehensive of death in their youth, and to guard against the amorous passions in their old age.

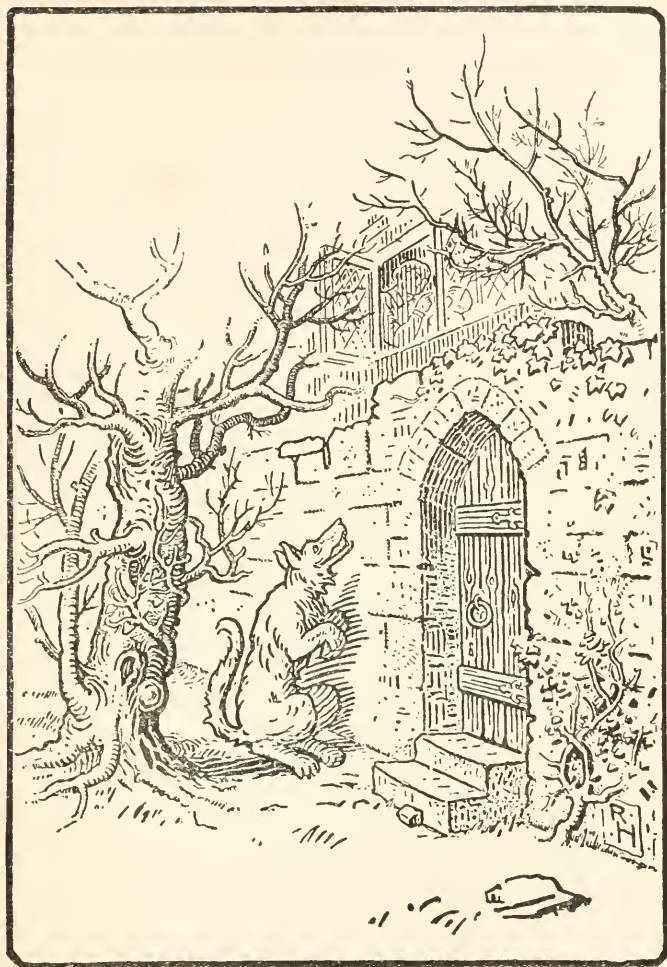


Enemies' promises were made to be broken.

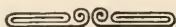
THE NURSE AND THE WOLF.

Be quiet now, said an old Nurse to a child sitting on her lap. If you make that noise again I will throw you to the Wolf.

Now it chanced that a Wolf was passing close under the window as this was said. So he crouched down by the side of the house and waited. I am in good luck to-day, thought he. It is sure to cry soon, and a daintier morsel I haven't had for many a long day. So he waited, and he waited, and he waited, till at last the child began to cry, and the Wolf came forward before the window,



and looked up to the Nurse, wagging his tail. But all the Nurse did was to shut down the window and call for help, and the dogs of the house came rushing out. Ah, said the Wolf as he galloped away, that old nurse is no friend of mine.



A mild disposition and a vindictive temper generally meet with suitable returns.

THE SENSITIVE PLANT AND THE THISTLE.

A Thistle happened to spring up very near to a Sensitive Plant. The former observing the extreme bashfulness and delicacy of the latter, addressed her in the following manner: Why are you so modest and reserved, my good neighbor, as to withdraw your leaves at the approach of strangers? Why do you shrink as if you were afraid, from the touch of every hand? Take example and advice from me: If I liked not their familiarity, I would make them keep their distance, nor should any saucy finger provoke me unrevenged. Our tempers and qualities, replied the other, are widely different; I have neither the ability nor inclination to give offense; you it seems are by no means destitute of either. My desire is to live peaceably in the station wherein I am placed; and though my humility may now and then cause me a moment's uneasiness, it tends on the whole to preserve my tranquillity. The case is otherwise with you, whose irritable temper, and revengeful disposition, will probably one time or other be the cause of your destruction. While they were thus arguing the point, the gardener came with his little

spade, in order to lighten the earth round the stem of the Sensitive Plant; but perceiving the Thistle, he thrust his instrument through the root of it, and directly tossed it out of his garden.



The folly of estimating the worth of others by the sole standard of our own conceptions.

PYTHAGORAS AND THE CRITIC.

Pythagoras was one day very earnestly engaged in taking an exact measure of the length of the olympic course. One of those conceited Critics, who aim at every thing, and are ready to interpose with their opinion upon all subjects, happened to be present, and could not help smiling to himself to see the Philosopher so employed, and to observe what great attention and pains he bestowed upon such a business. And pray, says he, accosting Pythagoras, may I presume to ask, with what design you have given yourself this trouble? Of that, replied the Philosopher, I shall very readily inform you. We are assured, that Hercules, when he instituted the olympic games, himself laid out this course by measure, and determined it to the length of six hundred feet, measuring it by the standard of his own foot. Now, by taking an exact measure of this space, and seeing how much it exceeds the measure of the same number of feet now in use, we can find how much the foot of Hercules, and in proportion his whole stature, exceeded that of the present generation. A very curious speculation, says the Critic, and of great use and importance, no doubt! And so you will demonstrate to us, that the bulk of this fabulous hero was equal to his extravagant enterprises and

his marvelous exploits. And pray Sir, what may be the result of your inquiry at last? I suppose, you can not tell me exactly to a hair's breadth, how tall Hercules was. The result of my inquiry, replied the Philosopher, is this: and it is a conclusion of greater use and importance than you seem to expect from it, that if you will always estimate the labors of the philosopher, the designs of the patriot, and the actions of the hero, by the standard of your own narrow conceptions, you will ever be greatly mistaken in your judgment concerning them.

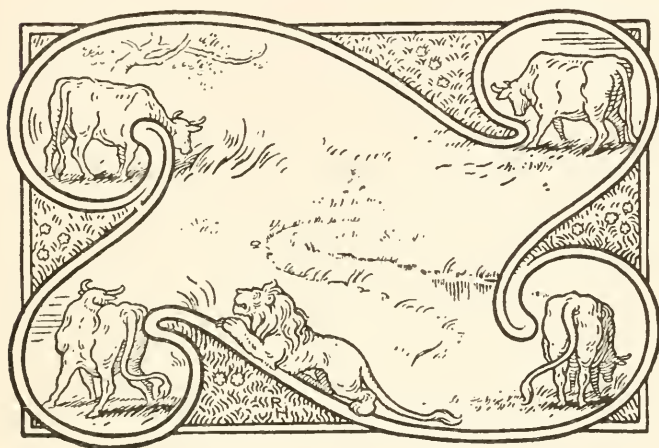


Imitation may be pardonable, where emulation would be presumptuous.

THE RED-BREAST AND THE SPARROW.

As a Red-breast was singing on a tree by the side of a rural cottage, a Sparrow perched upon the thatch took occasion thus to reprimand him: And dost thou, said he, with thy dull autumnal note, presume to emulate the Birds of Spring? Can thy weak warblings pretend to vie with the sprightly accents of the Thrush and Blackbird? with the various melody of the Lark or Nightingale? whom other birds far thy superiors, have been long content to admire in silence. Judge with candor at least, replied the Robin; nor impute those efforts to ambition solely, which may sometimes flow from the love of art. I reverence indeed, but by no means envy, the birds whose fame has stood the test of ages. Their songs have charmed both hill and dale, but their season is past, and their throats are silent. I feel not, however, the ambition to surpass or equal them; my efforts are of a much

humbler nature, and I may surely hope for pardon, while I endeavor to cheer these forsaken valleys, by an attempt to imitate the strains I love.



United we stand, divided we fall.

THE FOUR OXEN AND THE LION.

A Lion used to prowl about a field in which Four Oxen used to dwell. Many a time he tried to attack them, but whenever he came near they turned their tails to one another, so that whichever way he approached them he was met by the horns of one of them. At last, however, they fell a-quarreling among themselves, and each went off to pasture alone in a separate corner of the field. Then the Lion attacked them one by one and soon made an end of all four.

It is hardly possible to deprive malevolence of every occasion for a cavil.

MOMUS.

It is said that Momus was perpetually blaming and ridiculing whatever he saw. Even the works of the gods themselves could not escape his universal censure. The eyes of the bull, he said, were so placed by Jupiter, that they could not direct his horns in pushing at his enemies. The houses which Minerva had instructed men to build, were contrived so very injudiciously, that they could not remove them from a bad neighborhood, nor from any other inconvenience. In short, the frame of man himself was in his opinion extremely defective, having no window in his bosom that might demonstrate his sincerity, or betray his wicked purposes and prevent their execution. These and many other faults were found in the productions of nature, but when he surveyed the works of art, there was no end of his altercations. Jupiter, being resolved to try how far his malice would proceed, sent his daughter Venus to desire that he would give his opinion of her beauty. She appeared accordingly before the churlish god, trembling at the apprehension of his known severity. He examined her proportions with all the rigor of an envious critic. But her shape and complexion were so striking, and her smiles and graces so very engaging, that he found it impossible to give the least color to any objection he could make. Yet, to show how hard malevolence will struggle for a cavil: as she was retiring from his presence, he begged she would acquaint her father, that whatever grace might be in her motion, yet—her slippers were too noisy.

fine clothes may disguise, but silly words will disclose
a fool.

THE ASS IN THE LION'S SKIN.

An Ass once found a Lion's skin which the hunters had left out in the sun to dry. He put it on and went towards his native village. All fled at his approach, both men and animals, and he was a proud Ass that day.



"I · knew · you · by · your · voice!"

In his delight he lifted up his voice and brayed, but then every one knew him, and his owner came up and gave him a sound cudgeling for the fright he had caused. And shortly afterwards a Fox came up to him and said: Ah, I knew you by your voice.

An immoderate pursuit of pleasure is generally destructive of its object.

THE BOY AND THE BUTTERFLY.

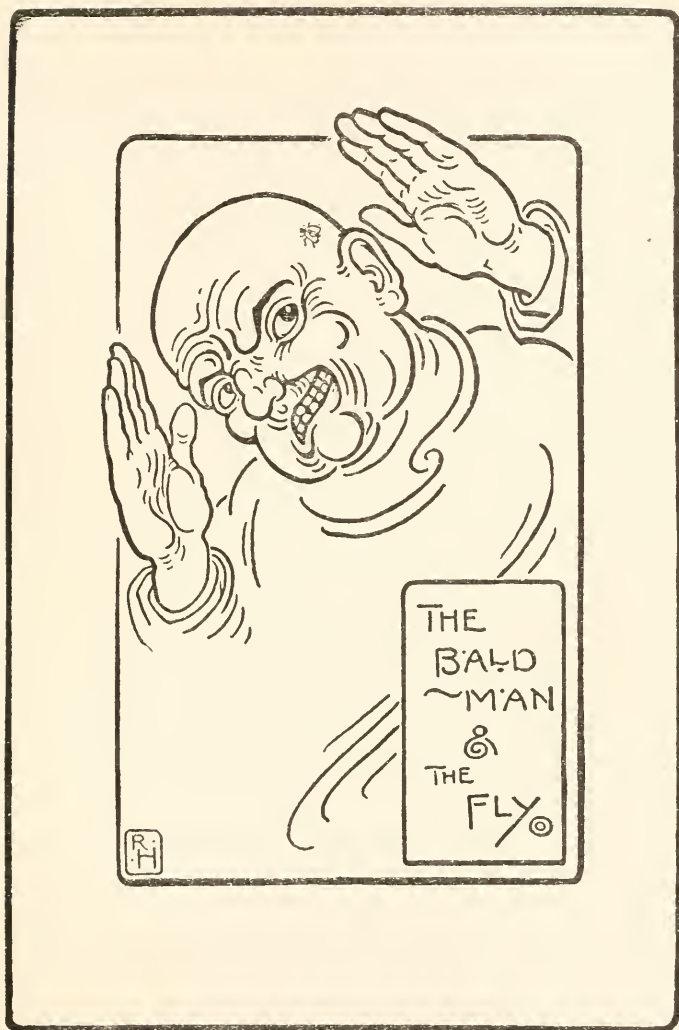
A Boy, greatly smitten with the colors of a Butterfly, pursued it from flower to flower with irrefragable pains. First he aimed to surprise it among the leaves of a rose; then to cover it with his hat, as it was feeding on a daisy; now hoped to secure it, as it rested on a sprig of myrtle; and now grew sure of his prize, perceiving it loiter on a bed of violets. But the fickle Fly, continually changing one blossom for another, still eluded his attempts. At length, observing it half buried in the cup of a tulip, he rushed forward, and snatching it with violence, crushed it all to pieces. The dying insect, seeing the poor boy somewhat chagrined at his disappointment, addressed him with all the calmness of a stoic, in the following manner.—Behold! now the end of thy unprofitable solicitude! and learn, for the benefit of thy future life, that all pleasure is but a painted Butterfly; which, although it may serve to amuse thee in the pursuit, if embraced with too much ardor, will perish in thy grasp.



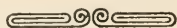
You will only injure yourself if you take notice of despicable enemies.

THE BALD MAN AND THE FLY.

There was once a Bald Man who sat down after work on a hot summer's day. A Fly came up and kept buzzing about his bald pate, and stinging him from time to



time. The Man aimed a blow at his little enemy, but—whack—his palm came on his head instead; again the Fly tormented him, but this time the Man was wiser and said: Since I cannot hit this lively pest, I will not beat my own head in the attempt.



The vain believe their imaginary perfections engross the attention of all mankind.

ECHO AND THE OWL.

The vain hear the flatteries of their own imagination, and fancy them to be the voice of fame.

A solemn Owl, puffed up with vanity, sat repeating her screams at midnight, from the hollow of a blasted oak. And whence, cried she, proceeds this awful silence, unless it be to favor my superior melody? Surely the groves are hushed in expectation of my voice, and when I sing, all nature listens. An Echo resounding from an adjacent rock, replied immediately, All nature listens. The nightingale, resumed she, has usurped the sovereignty by night: her note indeed is musical, but mine is sweeter far. The voice, confirming her opinion, replied again, Is sweeter far. Why then am I diffident, continued she, why do I fear to join the tuneful choir? The Echo, still flattering her vanity, repeated, Join the tuneful choir. Roused by this empty phantom of encouragement, she on the morrow mingled her hootings with the harmony of the groves. But the tuneful songsters, disgusted with her noise, and affronted by her impudence, unanimously drove her from their society, and still continue to pursue her wherever she appears.

fops may boast of extensive travels, but it is only a few
discerning persons that make the proper
use of them.

THE BUTTERFLY, THE SNAIL AND THE BEE.

A Butterfly, proudly perched on the gaudy leaves of a French marigold, was boasting the vast extent and variety of his travels. I have ranged, said he, over the graceful and majestic fences of Hagley,† and have feasted my eyes with elegance and variety at the Leasowes.* I have wandered through regions of Eglantine and Honey-suckle, I have revelled in kisses on beds of Violets and Cowslips, and have enjoyed the delicious fragrance of Roses and Carnations. In short, my fancy unbounded, and my flights unrestrained, I have visited with perfect freedom all the flowers of the field or garden, and must be allowed to know the world, in a superlative degree.

A Snail, who hung attentive to his wonders on a cabbage-leaf, was struck with admiration, and concluded him, from all this experience, to be the wisest of animal creatures.

It happened that a Bee pursued her occupation on a neighboring bed of marjoram, and having heard our ostentatious vagrant, reprimanded him in this manner. Vain, empty flutterer, said she, whom instruction cannot improve, nor experience itself enlighten! Thou hast rambled over the world; wherein does thy knowledge of it consist? Thou hast seen variety of objects, what conclusions hast thou drawn from them? Thou hast tasted of every amusement, hast thou extracted anything for use?

†Lord Lyttelton's.

*Mr. Shenstone's.

I, too, am a traveler; go and look into my hive, and let my treasures shadow out to thee, that the intent of traveling is, to collect materials either for the use and emolument of private life, or for the advantage of the community.



It is easy to propose impossible remedies.

BELLING THE CAT.

Long ago, the mice held a general council to consider what measures they could take to outwit their common enemy, the Cat. Some said this, and some said that, but at last a young mouse got up and said he had a proposal to make, which he thought would meet the case. You will all agree, said he, that our chief danger consists in the sly and treacherous manner in which the enemy approaches us. Now, if we could receive some signal of her approach, we could easily escape from her. I venture, therefore, to propose that a small bell be procured, and attached by a ribbon round the neck of the Cat. By this means we should always know when she was about and could easily retire while she was in the neighborhood.

This proposal met with general applause, until an old mouse got up and said: That is all very well, but who is to bell the Cat? The mice looked at one another and nobody spoke. Then the old mouse said: While you are belling the cat you will be in reach of her paws.



The fop who prides himself upon a large acquaintance
is seldom capable of real friendship

THE MAGPIE AND THE RAVEN.

There was a certain Magpie, more busy and more loquacious than any of his tribe. His tongue was in perpetual motion, and himself continually upon the wing, fluttering from place to place, and very seldom appearing twice together in the same company.

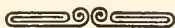
Sometimes you saw him with a flock of pigeons, plundering a field of new sown corn; anon, perched upon a cherry tree with a parcel of tom-tits; the next moment, you would be surprised to find the same individual bird engaged with a flight of crows, and feasting upon a carcass.

He took it one day into his head to visit an old Raven, who lived retired among the branches of a venerable oak, and there, at the foot of a lonely mountain, had passed near half a century.

I admire, says the prating bird, your most romantic situation, and the wildness of these rocks and precipices around you; I am absolutely transported with the murmur of that water-fall; methinks it diffuses a tranquillity, surpassing all the joys of public life. What an agreeable sequestration from worldly bustle and impertinence! What an opportunity of contemplating the divine beauties of nature! I shall most certainly, my dear, quit the gaieties of town, and for the sake of these rural scenes, and my good friend's conversation, pass the remainder of my days in the solitude he has chosen.

Well, Sir, replies the Raven, I shall be at all times glad to receive you in my old fashioned way, but you and I

should certainly prove most unsuitable companions. Your whole ambition is to shine in company, and to recommend yourself to the world by universal complaisance; whereas my greatest happiness consists in ease and privacy, and the select conversation of a few whom I esteem. I prefer a good heart to the most voluble tongue; and though questionless obliged to you for the politeness of your professions, yet I see your benevolence divided among so numerous an acquaintance, that a very slender share of it can remain for those you are pleased to honor with the name of friends.



The blessing of hope is better adapted to the state of mortals than the gift of prescience.

PROMETHEUS.

Prometheus formed man of the finest clay, and animated his work with fire stolen from heaven. He endowed him with all the faculties that are to be found amongst the animal creation; he gave him the courage of the lion, the subtlety of the fox, the providence of the ant, and the industry of the bee; and he enabled him by the superiority of his understanding, to subdue them all, and to make them subservient to his use and pleasure. He discovered to him the metals hidden in the bowels of the earth, and showed him their several uses. He instructed him in everything that might tend to cultivate and civilize human life; he taught him to till the ground, and to improve the fertility of nature; to build houses, to cover himself with garments, and to defend himself against the

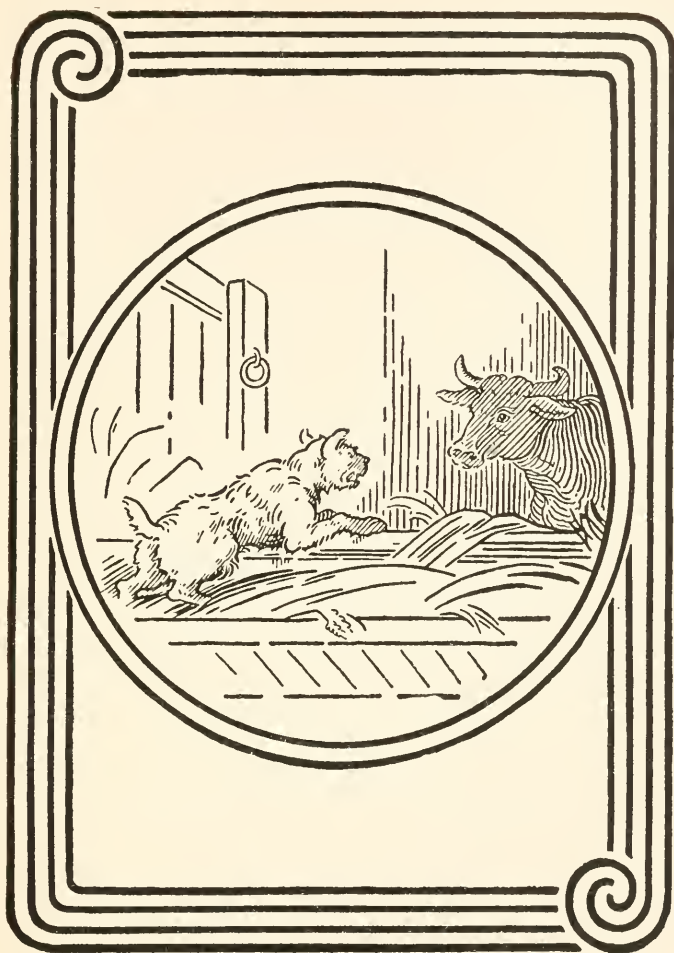
inclemencies of the air and the seasons; to compound medicines of salutary herbs, to heal wounds, and to cure diseases; to construct ships, to cross the seas, and to communicate to every country the riches of all. In a word, he imbued him with sense and memory, with sagacity and invention, with art and science, and to crown all, he gave him an insight into futurity. But, alas! this latter gift, instead of improving, wholly destroyed the proper effect of all the former. Furnished with all the means and instruments of happiness, man nevertheless was miserable; through the knowledge and dread of future evil, he was incapable of enjoying present good. Prometheus saw, and immediately resolved to remedy this inconvenience; he effectually restored man to a capacity of happiness, by depriving him of prescience, and giving him hope in its stead.



People often grudge others what they cannot enjoy themselves.

THE DOG IN THE MANGER.

A Dog looking out for its afternoon nap jumped into the Manger of an Ox and lay there cosily upon the straw. But soon the Ox, returning from its afternoon work, came up to the Manger and wanted to eat some of the straw. The Dog in a rage, being awakened from its slumber, stood up and barked at the Ox, and whenever it came near attempted to bite it. At last the Ox had to give up the hope of getting at the straw, and went away muttering: This surly beast will not yield to another that which is of no use to himself.



Yield to all and you will soon have nothing to yield.

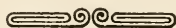
THE MAN AND HIS TWO WIVES

In the old days, when men were allowed to have many wives, a middle-aged Man had one wife that was old and one that was young; each loved him very much, and de-



sired to see him like herself. Now the Man's hair was turning gray, which the young Wife did not like, as it made him look too old for her husband. So every night she used to comb his hair and pick out the white ones. But the elder Wife saw her husband growing gray with

great pleasure, for she did not like to be mistaken for his mother. So every morning she used to arrange his hair and pick out as many of the black ones as she could. The consequence was the Man soon found himself entirely bald.



The rudeness of considering religious opinions as the proper object of ridicule.

THE BEAR.

A Bear who was bred in the savage deserts of Siberia, had an inclination to see the world. He traveled from forest to forest, and from one kingdom to another, mak-

ing many profound observations in his way. Among the rest of his excursions, he came by accident into a farmer's yard, where he saw a number of poultry standing to drink by the side of a pool. Observing that at every sip they turned up their heads toward the sky, he could not forbear inquiring the reason of so peculiar a ceremony. They told him it was by way of returning thanks to heaven for the benefits they received, and was indeed an ancient and religious custom, which they could not, with a safe conscience, or without impiety, omit. Here the Bear burst into a fit of laughter, at once mimicing their gestures, and ridiculing their superstition, in the most contemptuous manner. On this, the Cock, with a spirit suitable to the boldness of his character, addressed him in the following words: As you are a stranger, Sir, you perhaps may be excused the indecency of this behavior; yet give me leave to tell you, that none but a Bear would ridicule any religious ceremony whatsoever, in the presence of those who believe them of importance.

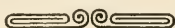


The weakness of placing the essence of religion in the mere observance of rites and ceremonies.

THE STORK AND THE CROW.

A Stork and a Crow had once a strong contention, which of them stood highest in the favor of Jupiter. The Crow alleged his skill in omens, his infallibility in prophecies, and his great use to the priests of that deity in all their sacrifices and religious ceremonies. The Stork urged only his blameless life, the care he took to preserve

his offspring, and the assistance he lent his parents under the infirmities of old age. It happened, as it generally does in religious disputes, that neither of them could confute the other; so they both agreed to refer the decision to Jupiter himself. On their joint application the god determined thus between them. Let none of my creatures despair of my regard; I know their weakness, I pity their errors, and whatever is well meant, I accept as it was intended. Yet sacrifices or ceremonies are in themselves of no importance, and every attempt to penetrate the counsels of the gods, is altogether as vain as it is presumptuous; but he who pays to Jupiter a just honor and reverence, who leads the most temperate life, and who does the most good in proportion to his abilities, as he best answers the end of his creation, will assuredly stand highest in the favor of his creator.

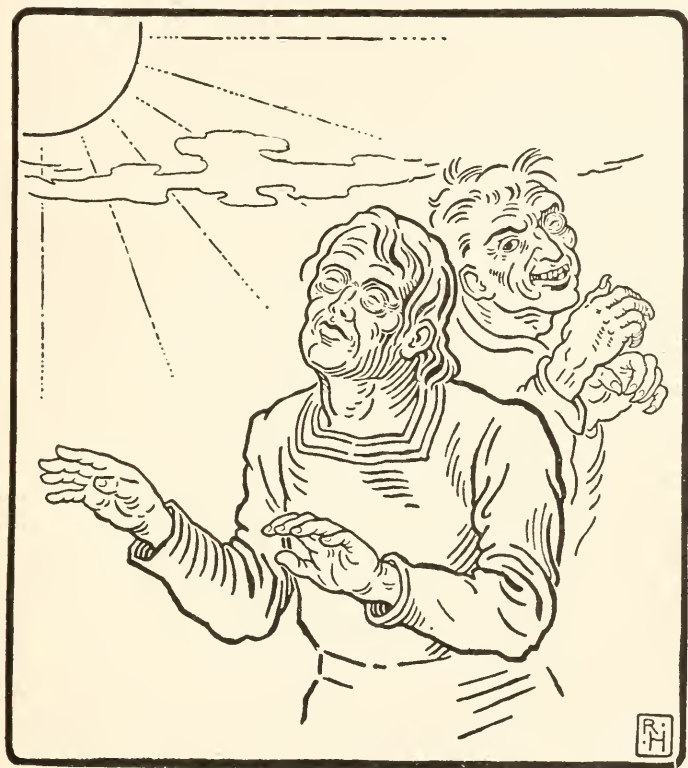


Vices are their own punishment.

AVARICIOUS AND ENVIOUS.

Two neighbors came before Jupiter and prayed him to grant their hearts' desire. Now the one was full of avarice, and the other eaten up with envy. So to punish them both, Jupiter granted that each might have whatever he wished for himself, but only on condition that his neighbor had twice as much. The Avaricious man prayed to have a room full of gold. No sooner said than done; but all his joy was turned to grief when he found that his neighbor had two rooms full of the precious metal. Then came the turn of the Envious man, who

could not bear to think that his neighbor had any joy at all. So he prayed that he might have one of his own eyes put out, by which means his companion would become totally blind.

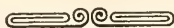


The greatest merit is often concealed under the most unpromising appearances.

THE DIAMOND AND THE LOADSTONE.

A Diamond of great beauty and luster, observing, not only many other gems of a lower class ranged together with him in the same cabinet, but a Loadstone likewise placed not far from him, began to question the latter, how he came there, and what pretensions he had to be ranked among the precious stones; he, who appeared to be no better than a mere flint; a sorry, coarse, rusty-looking pebble, without any the least shining quality to advance him to such an honor, and concluded with desiring him to keep his distance, and pay a proper respect to his superiors. I find, said the Loadstone, that you judge by external appearances, and it is your interest, that others should form their judgment by the same rule. I must own I have nothing to boast of in that respect, but I may venture to say, that I make amends for my outward defects, by my inward qualities. The great improvement of navigation in these latter ages is entirely owing to me. It is owing to me, that the distant parts of the world are known and accessible to each other; that the remotest peoples are connected together, and all in a manner united into one common society; that by a mutual intercourse they relieve one another's wants, and all enjoy the several blessings peculiar to each. Great nations are indebted to me for their wealth, splendor, and power; and the arts and sciences are in a great measure obliged to me for their late improvements, and their continual increase. I am willing to allow you your due praise in its full extent; you are a very pretty bauble; I am mightily delighted to see you glitter and sparkle; I look

upon you with pleasure and surprise, but I must be convinced that you are of some sort of use, before I acknowledge that you have any real merit, or treat you with that respect which you seem to demand.



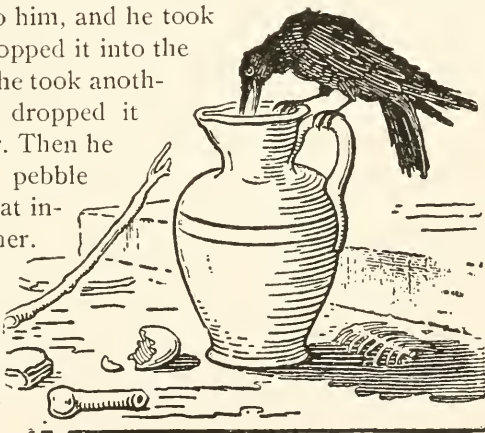
Little by little does the trick.

THE CROW AND THE PITCHER.

A Crow, half-dead with thirst, came upon a Pitcher which had once been full of water, but when the Crow put its beak into the mouth of the Pitcher he found that only very little water was left in it, and that he could not reach far enough down to get at it. He tried, and he tried, but at last had to give up in despair. Then a thought came to him, and he took

a pebble and dropped it into the Pitcher. Then he took another pebble and dropped it into the Pitcher. Then he took another pebble and dropped that into the Pitcher.

Then he took another pebble and dropped that into the Pitcher. Then he took another



pebble and dropped that into the Pitcher. Then he took another pebble and dropped that into the Pitcher. At last, at last, he saw the water mount up near him; and after casting in a few more pebbles he was able to quench his thirst and save his life.

The favors of the great are too often obstructed by the invidious offices of their mean dependents.

THE ECLIPSE.

One day when the Moon was under an Eclipse, she complained thus to the Sun of the discontinuance of his favors. My dearest friend, said she, why do you not shine upon me as you used to do? Do I not shine upon thee? said the Sun; I am very sure that I intend it. O no, replies the Moon, but I now perceive the reason. I see that dirty planet the earth, is got between us.

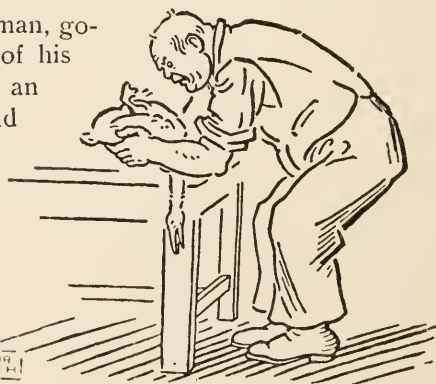
The good influences of the great would perhaps be more diffusive, were it not for their mischievous dependents, who are so frequently suffered to interpose.



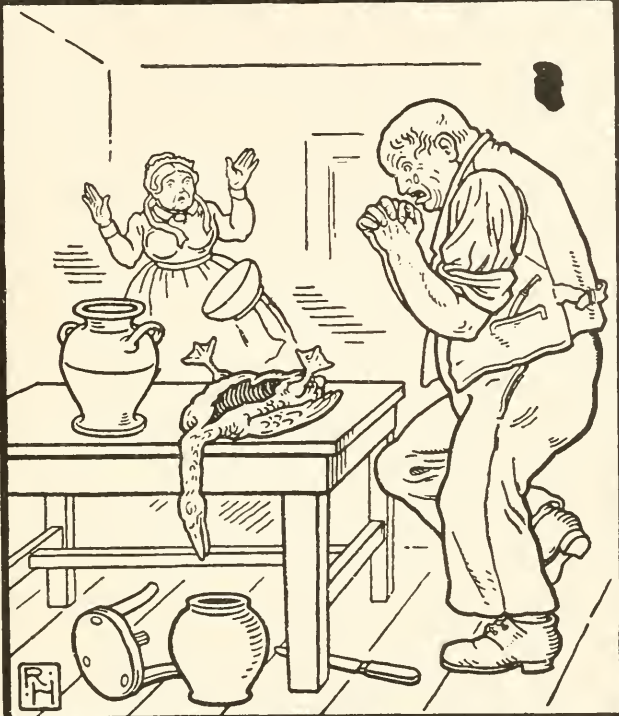
Greed often overreaches itself.

THE GOOSE WITH THE GOLDEN EGGS.

One day a countryman, going to the nest of his Goose, found there an egg all yellow and glittering. When he took it up it was as heavy as lead and he was going to throw it away, because he thought a trick had been played



:Greed·to·Need·doth·surely·lead:



THE:GOOSE:WITH:THE:GOLDEN:EGGS:

upon him. But he took it home on second thoughts, and soon found to his delight that it was an egg of pure gold. Every morning the same thing occurred, and he soon became rich by selling his eggs. As



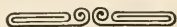
he grew rich he grew greedy, and thinking to get at once all the gold the Goose could give, he killed it and opened it only to find—nothing.

A lazy reliance on the antiquity of a family is, by far, less honorable than an honest industry.

THE TOAD AND THE EPHEMERON.

As some workmen were digging marble in a mountain of Scythia, they discerned a toad of an enormous size in the midst of a solid rock. They were very much surprised at so uncommon an appearance, and the more they considered the circumstances of it, the more their wonder increased. It was hard to conceive by what means this creature had preserved life and nourishment in so narrow a prison; and still more difficult to account for his birth and existence in a place so totally inaccessible to all of his species. They could conclude no other, than that he was formed together with the rock in which he had been bred, and was coeval with the mountain itself. While they were pursuing these speculations the Toad sat swelling and bloating, till he was ready to burst with pride and self-importance; to which at last he thus gave vent:—Yes, says he, you behold in me a specimen of the Antediluvian race of animals. I was begotten before the flood; and who is there among the present upstart race of mortals, that shall dare to contend with me in nobility of birth or dignity of character? An Ephemeron, sprung that morning from the river Hypanis, as he was flying about from place to place, chanced to be present, and observed all that passed with great attention and curiosity. Vain boaster, says he, what foundation hast thou for pride, either in thy descent, merely because it is ancient; or thy life, because it hath been long? What good qualities hast thou received from thy ancestors? Insignificant even to thy-

self, as well as useless to others, thou art almost as insensible as the block in which thou wast bred. Even I, that had my birth only from the scum of the neighboring river, at the rising of this day's sun, and who shall die at its setting, have more reason to applaud my condition, than thou hast to be proud of thine. I have enjoyed the warmth of the sun, the light of the day, and the purity of the air; I have flown from stream to stream, from tree to tree, and from the plain to the mountain; I have provided for posterity, and shall leave behind me a numerous offspring to people the next age of to-morrow; in short, I have fulfilled all the ends of my being, and I have been happy. My whole life, it is true, is but of twelve hours; but even one hour of it is to be preferred to a thousand years of mere existence; or that have been spent, like thine, in sloth, ignorance, and stupidity.



Love can tame the wildest.

THE LION IN LOVE.

A Lion once fell in love with a beautiful maiden and proposed marriage to her parents. The old people did not know what to say. They did not like to give their daughter to the Lion, yet they did not wish to enrage the King of Beasts. At last the father said: We feel highly honored by your Majesty's proposal, but you see our daughter is a tender young thing, and we fear that in the vehemence of your affection you might possibly do her some injury. Might I venture to suggest that your Majesty should have your claws removed, and your

teeth extracted, then we would gladly consider your proposal again. The Lion was so much in love that he had his claws trimmed and his big teeth taken out. But



when he came again to the parents of the young girl they simply laughed in his face, and bade him do his worst.



It is easy to despise what you cannot get.

THE FOX AND THE GRAPES.

One hot summer's day a Fox was strolling through an orchard till he came to a bunch of Grapes just ripening on a vine which had been trained over a lofty branch. Just the thing to quench my thirst, quoth he. Drawing back a few paces, he took a run and a jump, and just missed the bunch. Turning round again with a One, Two, Three, he jumped up, but with no greater success. Again and again he tried after the tempting morsel, but at last he had to give it up, and walked away with his nose in the air, saying: I am sure they are sour.



There are certain persons who require to be treated rather with spirit and resolution than with tenderness and delicacy.

THE BOY AND THE NETTLE.

A Little Boy, playing in the fields, chanced to be stung by a Nettle, and came crying to his father; he told him he had been hurt by that nasty weed several times before, that he was always afraid of it, and that now he did but just touch it, as lightly as possible, when he was so severely stung. Child, says the father, your touching it so gently and timorously is the very reason of its hurting you. A Nettle may be handled safely, if you do it with courage and resolution; if you seize it boldly, and grip it fast, depend upon it, it will never sting you; and you will meet with many sorts of persons, as well as things in the world, which ought to be treated in the very same manner.

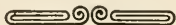


The misery of depending upon patrons whose charity has too much to do at home.

THE BEGGAR AND HIS DOG.

A Beggar and his Dog sat at the gate of a noble Courtier, and were preparing to make a meal on a bowl of fragments from the Kitchenmaid. A poor dependent of his Lordship's, who had been sharing the singular favor of a dinner at the steward's table, was struck with their appearance, and stopped a little to observe them.

The Beggar, hungry and voracious as any Courtier in Christendom, seized with greediness the choicest morsels, and swallowed them himself; the residue was divided into portions for his children. A scrag was thrust into one pocket for honest Jack, a crust into another for bashful Tom, and a luncheon of cheese wrapt up with care for the little favorite of his hopeful family. In short, if anything was thrown to the Dog, it was a bone so closely picked, that it scarce afforded a pittance to keep life and soul together. How exactly alike, said the dependent, is this poor Dog's case and mine! He is watching for a dinner from a master who cannot spare it; I for a place from a needy Lord, whose wants perhaps are greater than my own; and whose relations, more clamorous than any of this Beggar's brats. Shrewdly was it said by an ingenious writer, a Courtier's Dependent is a Beggar's Dog.



Wit has always an answer ready.

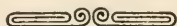
THE ASS'S BRAINS.

The Lion and the Fox went hunting together. The Lion, on the advice of the Fox, sent a message to the Ass, proposing to make an alliance between their two families. The Ass came to the place of meeting, overjoyed at the prospect of a royal alliance. But when he came there the Lion simply pounced on the Ass, and said to the Fox: Here is our dinner for to-day. Watch you here while I go and have a nap. Woe betide you if you touch my prey. The Lion went away and the Fox waited; but finding that his master did not return,



ventured to take out the brains of the Ass and ate them up. When the Lion came back he soon noticed the absence of the brains, and asked the Fox in a terrible voice: What have you done with the brains?

Brains, your Majesty! it had none, or it would never have fallen into your trap.



The pleasures of life would be a balance for the pains,
did we not increase the latter by our perverseness.

THE DISCONTENTED BEE.

A Bee complained to Jupiter, of the numerous evils to which her condition exposed her. Her body, she said, was weak and feeble, yet was she condemned to get her living by perpetual toil; she was benumbed by the cold of winter, and relaxed by the heat of summer. Her haunts were infected with poisonous weeds, and her flights obstructed by storms and tempests. In short, what with dangers from without, and diseases from within, her life was rendered one continual scene of anxiety and wretchedness. Behold now, said Jupiter, the frowardness and folly of this unthankful race! The flowers of the field I have spread before them as a feast, and have endeavored to regale them with an endless variety. They now revel on odoriferous beds of thyme and lavender, and now on the still more fragrant banks of violets and roses. The business they complain of, is the extraction of honey; and, to alleviate their toil, I have allowed them wings, which readily transport them from one delicious banquet to another. Storms, tempests, and noxious weeds, I have

given them sagacity to shun; and if ever they are misled, 'tis through the perverseness of their inclinations. But thus it is with Bees, and thus with Men; they misconstrue the benevolence of my designs, and then complain that my decrees are rigid; they ungratefully overlook all the advantages, and magnify all the inconveniences of their station. But let my creatures pursue their happiness, through the paths marked out by nature; and they will then feel no pains, which they have not pleasures to compensate.



The folly of resting in second causes without reference to the first.

THE TUBEROSE AND THE SUN-FLOWER.

A Tuberose in a bow-window on the north side of a stately villa, addressed a Sun-flower which grew on a slope, that was contiguous to the house. Pray, says he, neighbor Turnsole, to what purpose do you pay all this devotion to that fictitious deity of yours, the Sun? Why are you continually distorting your body, and casting up your eyes to that glaring luminary? What superstition induces you to think that we flowers exist only through his influence? Both you and I are surely indebted to the hot-bed, and to the diligence of the gardener, for our production and support. For my part, I shall reserve my homage, together with my sweets, for that benevolent master who is continually watering and refreshing me; nor do I desire ever to see the face of that Sun you so vainly idolize, while I can enjoy the cool shade of this magnificent saloon. Truce with thy blasphemies, re-

plied the Sun-flower; why dost thou revile that glorious being, who dispenses life and vigor, not only to us, but to every part of the creation? Without this, alas! how ineffectual were the skill and vigilance of thy boasted master, either to support thy tender frame, or even to preserve his own! But this must ever be the case with such contracted understandings who think it sufficient to point out our more immediate benefactors, without regarding that original source, from which all beneficence proceeds.



When you are in a man's power you must do as he bids you.

THE FISHER.

A Fisher once took his bagpipes to the bank of a river, and played upon them with the hope of making the fish rise; but never a one put his nose out of the water. So he cast his net into the river and soon drew it forth filled with fish. Then he took his bagpipes again, and, as he played, the fish leapt up in the net. Ah, you dance now when I play, said he.

Yes, said an old Fish, but not to your music; it is under the constraint of your power.



Folly has often too great an influence in the direction of our amours.

LOVE AND FOLLY.

In the most early state of things, and among the eldest of beings, existed that God as the poets entitle him, or rather that Dæmon as Plato calls him, whose name is Love. He was assisting the father of the Gods in reducing Chaos into order, in establishing the harmony of the universe, and in regulating and putting in execution the laws by which the operations of nature are performed, and the frame of the world subsists. Universal good seemed to be his only study, and he was the supreme delight both of Gods and men. But in process of time, among other disorders that arose in the universe, it appeared that Love began to deviate very often from what had seemed till now to be his chief pursuit; he would raise frequent disturbances and confusion in the course of nature; though it was always under the pretense of maintaining order and agreement. It seems he had entered into a very intimate acquaintance with a person, who had but lately made her appearance in the world. This person was Folly, the daughter of Pride and Ignorance. They were very often together, and as often as they were, some mischief was sure to be the consequence. By degrees he introduced her into the heavens; where it was their great joy by various artifices to lead the Gods into such measures as involved them in many inconveniences, and exposed them to much ridicule. They deluded them all in their turns, except Minerva, the only divinity that escaped their wiles. Even Jupiter himself was induced by them to take some steps not at all suit-

able to the dignity of his character. Folly had gotten the entire ascendant over her companion; however, she was resolved to make still more sure of him, and engross him wholly to herself; with this design she infused a certain intoxicating juice into his nectar, the effects of which were so powerful, that in the end it utterly deprived him of his sight. Love was too much prejudiced in her favor, to apprehend her to be the cause of his misfortune; nor indeed did he seem to be in the least sensible of his condition. But his mother Venus soon found it out; and in the excess of her grief and rage carried her complaint to Jupiter, conjuring him to punish the sorceress who had blinded her son. Jupiter, willing to clear the heavens of such troublesome company, called both parties before him, and inquired into their conduct. After a full hearing, he determined that Folly should make some sort of reparation for the injury done to Love; and being resolved to punish both for the many irregularities which they had lately introduced, he condemned Love to wander about the earth, and ordered Folly to be his guide.

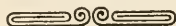


That friend is highly to be respected at all times, whose friendship is chiefly distinguished in adversity.

THE LAURUSTINUS AND THE ROSETREE.

In the quarters of a shrubbery, where deciduous plants and evergreens were intermingled with an air of negligence, it happened that a Rose grew not far from a Laurustinus. The Rose, enlivened by the breath of June, and attired in all its gorgeous blossoms, looked with

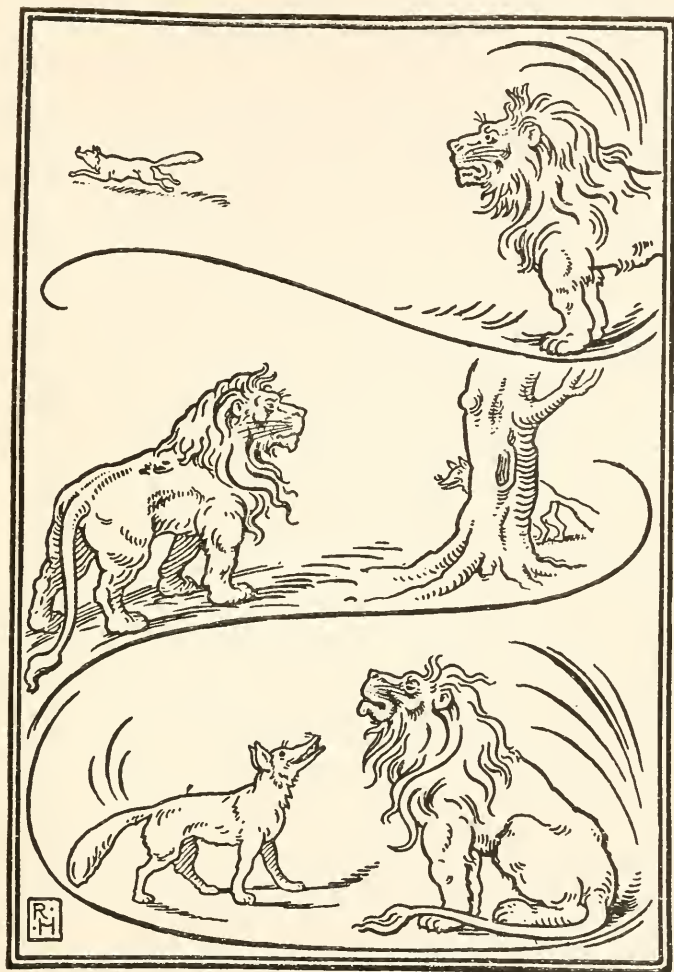
much contempt on the Laurustinus; who had nothing to display but the dusky verdure of its leaves. What a wretched neighborhood, -cried she, is this! and how unworthy to partake the honor of my company! Better to bloom and die in the desert, than to associate myself here with such low and dirty vegetables. And is this my lot at last, whom every nation has agreed to honor, and every Poet conspired to reverence, as the undoubted sovereign of the field and garden? If I really am so, let my subjects at least keep their distance, and let a circle remain vacant round me, suitable to the state my rank requires. Here, gardener—bring thy hatchet; prithee cut down this Laurustinus; or at least remove it to its proper sphere. Be pacified, my lovely Rose, replied the Gardener; enjoy thy sovereignty with moderation, and thou shalt receive all the homage which thy beauty can require. But remember that in winter, when neither thou nor any of thy tribe produce one flower or leaf to cheer me, this faithful shrub, which thou despiseth, will become the glory of my garden. Prudence therefore as well as gratitude is concerned in the protection of a friend, that will show his friendship in adversity.



Familiarity breeds contempt.

THE FOX AND THE LION.

When first the Fox saw the Lion he was terribly frightened, and ran away and hid himself in the wood. Next time however he came near the King of Beasts he stopped at a safe distance and watched him pass by. The third time they came near one another the Fox went



straight up to the Lion and passed the time of day with him, asking him how his family were, and when he should have the pleasure of seeing him again; then turning his tail, he parted from the Lion without much ceremony.



The facility with which many evils may be conquered at first, which, being long neglected, become insurmountable.

THE TENTYRITES AND THE ICHNEUMON.

A Crocodile of prodigious size, and uncommon fierceness, infested the banks of the Nile, and spread desolation through all the neighboring country. He seized the shepherd together with the sheep, and devoured the herdsmen as well as the cattle. Emboldened by success, and the terror which prevailed wherever he appeared, he ventured to carry his incursions even into the island of Tentyra, and to brave the people, who boast themselves the only tamers of his race. The Tentyrites themselves were struck with horror, at the appearance of a monster so much more terrible than they had even seen before; even the boldest of them dared not to attack him openly; and the most experienced long endeavored with all their art and address to surprise him, but in vain. As they

were consulting together, what they should do in these circumstances, an Ichneumon stepped forth, and thus addressed them: I perceive your distress, neighbors; and though I cannot assist you in the present difficulty, yet give me leave to offer you some advice that may be of use to you for the future. A little prudence is worth all your art and your courage; it may be glorious to overcome a great evil, but the wisest way is to prevent it. You despise the Crocodile while he is small and weak; and do not sufficiently consider, that as he is a long-lived animal, so it is his peculiar property to grow as long as he lives. You see I am a poor, little, feeble creature; yet am I much more terrible to the Crocodile, and more useful to the country, than you are. I attack him in the egg; and while you are contriving for months together, how to get the better of one Crocodile, and all to no purpose, I effectually destroy fifty of them in a day.

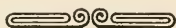


External beauty will often captivate; but it is internal merit that secures the conquest.

THE TULIP AND THE ROSE.

A Tulip and a Rose happened to be near neighbors in the same garden. They were both indeed extremely beautiful; yet the Rose engaged considerably more than an equal share of the gardener's attention. Enamored, as in truth he was, of the delicious odor it diffused; he appeared, in the eye of the Tulip, to be always kissing and caressing it. The envy and jealousy of rival beauties are not easily to be concealed. The Tulip, vain of its ex-

ternal charms, and unable to bear the thought of being forsaken for another, remonstrated in these words against the gardener's partiality: Why are my beauties thus neglected? Are not my colors more bright, more various, and more inviting, than any which that red-faced Thing has to display? Why then is she to engross your whole affection, and thus forever to be preferred?—Be not dissatisfied, my fair Tulip, said the gardener; I acknowledge thy beauties, and admire them as they deserve. But there are found in my favorite Rose such attractive odors, such internal charms, that I enjoy a banquet in their fragrance, which no mere beauty can pretend to furnish.



A voracious appetite, and a fondness for dainties, equally take off our attention from more material concerns.

THE WOODCOCK AND THE MALLARD.

A Woodcock and a Mallard were feeding together in some marshy ground at the tail of a mill-pond. Lord, says the squeamish Woodcock, in what a voracious and beastly manner do you devour all that comes before you! Neither snail, frog, toad, nor any kind of filth, can escape the fury of your enormous appetite. All alike goes down, without measure and without distinction.—What an odious vice is Gluttony!

Good-lack! replied the Mallard, pray how came you to be my accuser? And whence has your excessive delicacy a right to censure my plain eating? Is it a crime to fill one's belly? Or is it not indeed a virtue rather, to be pleased with the food which nature offers us? Surely

I would sooner be charged with gluttony, than with that finical and sickly appetite, on which you are pleased to ground your superiority of taste.—What a silly vice is Daintiness!

Thus endeavoring to palliate their respective passions, our epicures parted with a mutual contempt. The Mallard hasting to devour some garbage, which was in reality a bait, immediately gorged a hook through mere greediness and oversight; while the Woodcock, flying through a glade, in order to seek his favorite juices, was entangled in a net, spread across it for that purpose; falling each of them a sacrifice to their different, but equal, foibles.



We should never estimate things beyond our reach by the narrow standard of our own capacities.

THE FLY IN ST. PAUL'S CUPOLA.

As a Fly was crawling leisurely up one of the columns of St. Paul's Cupola, she often stopped, surveyed, examined, and at last broke forth into the following exclamation. Strange! that any one who pretended to be an artist, should ever leave so superb a structure, with so many roughnesses unpolished! Ah, my friend! said a very learned architect, who hung in his web under one of the capitals, you should never decide of things beyond the extent of your capacity. This lofty building was not erected for such diminutive animals as you or me; but for a certain sort of creatures, who are at least ten thousand times as large; to their eyes, it is very possible, these columns may seem as smooth, as to you appear the wings of your favorite Mistress.

We must toil in summer if we would eat in winter.

THE ANT AND THE GRASSHOPPER.

In a field one summer's day a Grasshopper was hopping about, chirping and singing to its heart's content. An Ant passed by, bearing along with great toil an ear of corn he was taking to the nest.

Why not come and chat with me, said the Grasshopper, instead of toiling and moiling in that way?

I am helping to lay up food for the winter, said the Ant, and recommend you to do the same.

Why bother about winter? said the Grasshopper; we have got plenty of food at present. But the Ant went on its way and continued its toil. When the winter came the Grasshopper had no food, and found itself dying of hunger, while it saw the ants distributing every day corn and grain from the stores they had collected in the summer. Then the Grasshopper knew.

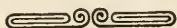


An excess of delicacy is to be considered rather as an infirmity than as a virtue.

THE SENSITIVE PLANT AND THE PALMTREE.

The Sensitive Plant being brought out of the greenhouse on a fine summer's day, and placed in a beautiful grove adorned with the finest forest trees and the most curious plants, began to give himself great airs, and to treat all that were about him with much petulance and disdain. Lord! says he, how could the gardener think of setting me among a parcel of trees, gross, inanimate things, mere vegetables, and perfect stocks! Sure he does not take me for a common plant, when he knows, that I have the sense of feeling in a more exquisite degree than he has himself. It really shocks me to see into what wretched low company he has introduced me; it is more than the delicacy of my constitution, and the extreme tenderness of my nerves, can bear. Pray, Mr. Acacia, stand a little farther off, and don't presume quite so much upon your idle pretense of being my cousin. Good Mr. Citron, keep your distance, I beseech you; your strong scent quite overpowers me. Friend Palmtree, your offensive shade is really more than I am able to support. The lofty Palmtree, though little moved by so unmannerly an attack, condescended to rebuke the impertinent creature in the following manner: Thou vegetable fribble! learn to know thyself, and thy own worthlessness and insignificancy. Thou valuest thyself on a vicious softness, a false delicacy, the very defect and imbecility of thy nature. What art thou good for, that shrinkest at a touch, and droopest at a breath of air; feeble and barren, a perpetual torment to thyself, and

wholly useless to others. Whereas we, whom thou treatest with such disdain, make a grateful return to man for his care of us; some of us yield him fruit; others are serviceable to him by their strength and firmness; we shade him from the heat of the sun, and we defend him from the violence of the winds. I am particularly distinguished for my hardiness and perseverance, my steadiness and constancy; and on account of those very qualities which thou wantest and affectest to despise, have the honor to be made the emblem of conquest, and the reward of the Conqueror.



A person can hardly be deemed too cautious where the first mistake is irretrievable, or fatal.

THE TWO TROUT AND THE GUDGEON.

A Fisherman in the Month of May, stood angling on the bank of a river, with an artificial fly. He threw his bait with so much art, that a young Trout was rushing towards it, when she was prevented by her mother. Never, said she, my child, be too precipitate, where there is a possibility of danger. Take due time to consider, before you risk an action that may be fatal. How know you whether yon appearance be indeed a fly, or the snare of an enemy? Let someone else make the experiment before you. If it be a fly, he very probably will elude the first attack, and then the second may be made, if not with success, at least with safety. She had no sooner uttered this caution, than a Gudgeon seized upon the pretended fly, and became an example to the giddy daughter, of the great importance of her mother's counsel.



Humility extenuates a crime; but hypocrisy and impudence are equal aggravations of it.

THE FARMER AND HIS THREE ENEMIES.

A Wolf, a Fox and a Hare happened one evening to be foraging in different parts of a Farmer's yard. Their first effort was pretty successful, and they returned in safety to their several quarters; however, not so happy as to be unperceived by the Farmer's watchful eye; who, placing several kinds of snares, made each of them his prisoner in the next attempt. He first took the Hare to task, who confessed she had eaten a few turnip-tops, merely to satisfy her hunger; besought him piteously to spare her life, and promised never to enter his grounds again. He then accosted the Fox; who in a fawning obsequious tone, protested that he came into his premises, through no other motive than pure good will, to restrain the Hares and other vermin from the plunder of his corn; and that, whatever evil tongues might say, he had too great a regard both for him and for justice, to be in the least capable of any dishonest action. He last of all examined the Wolf, what business brought him within the purlieu of a Farmer's yard. The Wolf very impudently declared, it was with a view of destroying his lambs, to which he had an undoubted right; that the Farmer himself was the only felon, who robbed the community of Wolves of what was meant to be their proper food:—That this, at least, was his opinion; and, whatever fate attended him, he should not scruple to risk his life in the pursuit of his lawful prey.

The Farmer having heard their pleas, determined the cause in the following manner. The Hare, said he, de-

serves compassion, for the penitence he shows, and the humble confession he has made:—As for the Fox and the Wolf, let them be hanged together; their crimes themselves alike deserve it, and are equally heightened by the aggravations of hypocrisy and of impudence.



The fault we sometimes impute to a character is only to be found in the observer.

THE MONSTER IN THE SUN.

An Astronomer was observing the Sun through a telescope, in order to take an exact draught of the several spots, which appear upon the face of it. While he was intent upon his observations, he was on a sudden surprised with a new and astonishing appearance; a large portion of the surface of the Sun was at once covered by a monster of enormous size and horrible form; it had an immense pair of wings, a great number of legs, and a long and vast proboscis; and that it was alive was very apparent, from his quick and violent motions, which the observer could from time to time plainly perceive. Being sure of the fact (for how could he be mistaken in what he saw so clearly?) our Philosopher began to draw many surprising conclusions from premises so well established. He calculated the magnitude of this extraordinary animal, and found that he covered about two square degrees of the Sun's surface; that placed upon the earth he would spread over half one hemisphere of it; and that he was seven or eight times as big as the moon. But what was most astonishing, was the prodigious heat that he must

endure; it was plain, that he was something of the nature of the salamander, but of a far more fiery temperament; for it was demonstrable from the clearest principles, that in his present situation he must have acquired a degree of heat two thousand times exceeding that of red hot iron. It was a problem worth considering, whether he subsisted upon the gross vapors of the Sun, and so from time to time cleared away those spots which they are perpetually forming, and which would otherwise wholly obscure and incrustate its face; or whether it might not feed on the solid substance of the orb itself, which by this means, together with the constant expense of light, must soon be exhausted and consumed; or whether he was not now and then supplied by the falling of some eccentric Comet into the Sun. However this might be, he found by computation that the earth would be but short allowance for him for a few months; and farther, it was no improbable conjecture, that, as the earth was destined to be destroyed by fire, this fiery flying Monster would remove hither at the appointed time, and might much more easily and conveniently effect a conflagration, than any Comet, hitherto provided for that service. In the earnest pursuit of these, and many the like deep and curious speculations, the Astronomer was engaged, and was preparing to communicate them to the public. In the meantime, the discovery began to be much talked of; and all the virtuosi gathered together to see so strange a sight. They were equally convinced of the accuracy of the observation, and of the conclusions so clearly deduced from it. At last, one, more cautious than the rest, was resolved, before he gave a full assent to the report of his senses, to examine the whole process of the affair, and all the parts of the instrument; he opened the Telescope, and behold! a small Fly was in-

closed in it, which having settled on the center of the object-glass had given occasion to all this marvelous Theory.

How often do men, through prejudice and passion, through envy and malice, fix upon the brightest and most exalted characters the grossest and most improbable imputations. It behooves us upon such occasions to be upon our guard, and to suspend our judgments; the fault perhaps is not in the object, but in the mind of the observer.

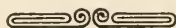


He that has many friends, has no friends.

THE HARE WITH MANY FRIENDS.

A Hare was very popular with the other beasts, who all claimed to be her friends. But one day she heard the hounds approaching and hoped to escape them by the aid of her many Friends. So she went to the horse, and asked him to carry her away from the hounds on his back. But he declined, stating that he had important work to do for his master. He felt sure, he said, that all her other friends would come to her assistance. She then applied to the bull, and hoped that he would repel the hounds with his horns. The bull replied: I am very sorry, but I have an appointment with a lady; but I feel sure that our friend the goat will do what you want. The goat, however, feared that his back might do her some

harm if he took her upon it. The ram, he felt sure, was the proper friend to apply to. So she went to the ram and told him the case. The ram replied: Another time, my dear friend. I do not like to interfere on the present occasion, as hounds have been known to eat sheep as well as hares. The Hare then applied, as a last hope, to the calf, who regretted that he was unable to help her, as he did not like to take the responsibility upon himself, as so many persons older than himself had declined the task. By this time the hounds were quite near, and the Hare took to her heels and luckily escaped.



A generous nature will find resources in economy for the occasional exercise of beneficence and hospitality.

THE WATERFALL.

From the head of a narrow valley that is wholly overshadowed by the growth of trees, a large cascade bursts forth with a luxuriance unexpected. First the current rushes down a precipice with headlong impetuosity; then dashes from rock to rock, and divided as it rolls along by fragments of stone or trunks of trees, it assumes a milk-white appearance, and sparkles through the gloom. All is intricacy; all is profusion; and the tide, however ample, appears yet more considerable by the fantastic growth of roots that hide the limits of its channel. Thus bounding down from one descent to another, it no sooner gains the level, than it sinks beneath the earth, and buries all its glory at our feet.

A spectator, privy to the scanty source which furnished out this grand appearance, stood one day in a musing

posture, and began to moralize on its prodigality. Ah silly stream! said he, why wilt thou hasten to exhaust thy source, and thus wilfully incur the contempt that waits on poverty? Art thou ignorant that thy funds are by no means equal to this expense? Fear not, my kind adviser, replied the generous cascade; the gratitude I owe my master, who collected my rills into a stream, induces me to entertain his friends in the best manner I am able; when alone, I act with more economy.



People who pride themselves upon their independence often slight economy, the sole foundation of it.

THE ELM TREE AND THE VINE.

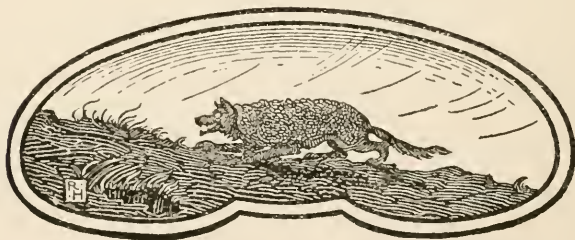
An extravagant young Vine, vainly ambitious of independency, and fond of rambling at large, despised the alliance of a stately Elm that grew near, and courted her embraces. Having risen to some small height without any kind of support, she shot forth her flimsy branches to a very uncommon and superfluous length; calling on her neighbor to take notice how little she wanted his assistance. Poor infatuated shrub, replied the Elm, how inconsistent is thy conduct! Wouldst thou be truly independent, thou shouldst carefully apply those juices to the enlargement of thy stem, which thou lavishest in vain upon unnecessary foliage. I shortly shall behold thee groveling on the ground; yet countenanced, indeed, by many of the human race, who intoxicated with vanity, have despised economy; and who, to support for a moment their empty boast of independence, have exhausted the very source of it in frivolous expenses.



Appearances are deceptive.

THE WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING.

A Wolf found great difficulty in getting at the sheep owing to the vigilance of the shepherd and his dogs. But one day it found the skin of a sheep that had been flayed and thrown aside, so it put it on over its own pelt and strolled down among the sheep. The Lamb that belonged to the sheep, whose skin the Wolf was wearing, began to follow the Wolf in the Sheep's clothing; so, leading the Lamb a little apart, he soon made a meal off her, and for some time he succeeded in deceiving the sheep, and enjoying hearty meals.



Truth, though vanquished, returns again; slander is never of a durable nature.

THE SUN AND THE VAPOR.

In the evening of a summer's day, as the Sun descended behind the western hills, he beheld a thick and unwholesome Vapor extending itself over the whole face of the valleys. Every shrub and every flower immediately folded up its leaves, and shrunk from the touch of this detested enemy. Well hast thou chosen, said the god of day, this the hour of my departure, to spread thy pestilential influence, and taint the beauties of creation. Enjoy for a short space the notable triumphs of thy malignity. I shall return again with the morning, repair thy mischiefs, and put an end to thy existence. May the slanderer, in time discern the fate of calumny, and be warned to dread the return of the Truth.



The parade and ceremony belonging to the great are often a restraint upon their freedom and activity.

THE PEACOCK.

The Peacock, who at first was distinguished only by a crest of feathers, preferred a petition to Juno that he might be honored also with a train. As the bird was a particular favorite, Juno readily enough assented; and his train was ordered to surpass that of every fowl in the creation. The Minion, conscious of his superb appearance, thought it requisite to assume a proportionable dig-

nity of gait and manners. The common poultry of the farm-yard were quite astonished at his magnificence; and even the pheasants themselves beheld him with an eye of



envy.—But when he attempted to fly, he perceived himself to have sacrificed all his activity to ostentation; and that he was encumbered by the pomp in which he placed his glory.

Learning is undoubtedly of the utmost advantage to real genius: yet, when put in competition, the resources of the one are limited, and of the other inexhaustible.

THE NIGHTINGALE AND THE BULLFINCH.

A Nightingale and a Bullfinch occupied two cages in the same apartment. The Nightingale perpetually varied her song, and every effort she made, afforded fresh entertainment. The Bullfinch always whistled the same dull tune that he had learnt, till all the family grew weary of the disgustful repetition. What is the reason, said the Bullfinch one day to his neighbor, that your songs are always heard with peculiar attention, while mine, I observe, are almost as wholly disregarded? The reason, replied the Nightingale, is obvious; your audience are sufficiently acquainted with every note you have been taught, and they know your natural abilities too well, to expect anything new from that quarter. How then can you suppose they will listen to a songster, from whom nothing native or original is to be expected?



Better humble security than gilded danger.

THE HORSE AND THE ASS.

A Horse and an Ass were traveling together, the Horse prancing along in its fine trappings, the Ass carrying with difficulty the heavy weight in its panniers. I wish I were you, sighed the Ass; nothing to do and

well fed, and all that fine harness upon you. Next day, however, there was a great battle, and the Horse was wounded to death in the final charge of the day. His



friend, the Ass, happened to pass by shortly afterwards and found him on the point of death. I was wrong, said the Ass. One has to pay dearly for honors.

He who is puffed up with the least gale of prosperity, will as suddenly sink beneath the blasts of misfortune.

THE OAK AND THE SYCAMORE.

A Sycamore grew beside an Oak; and being not a little elevated by the first warm days in spring, began to pour forth its leaves apace, and to despise the naked Oak for insensibility, and want of spirit. The Oak, conscious of its superior nature, made this stoical reply. Be not, my friend, so much delighted with the first address of every fickle zephyr; consider the frosts may yet return; do not afford them an opportunity to nip thy beauties in their bud, if thou covetest an equal share in all the glories of the rising year. As for me, I only wait to see this genial warmth a little confirmed; and, whenever this is the case, I shall perhaps display a majesty that will not easily be shaken. But the tree that appears too suddenly affected by the first favorable glance of spring, will ever be the first to shed its verdure, and to droop beneath the frowns of winter.



Better one safe way than a hundred on which you cannot reckon.

THE FOX AND THE CAT.

A Fox was boasting to a Cat of its clever devices for escaping its enemies. I have a whole bag of tricks, he said, which contains a hundred ways of escaping my enemies.

I have only one, said the Cat; but I can generally manage with that. Just at that moment they heard the cry of a pack of hounds coming towards them, and the Cat immediately scampered up a tree and hid herself in the boughs. This is my plan, said the Cat. What are you



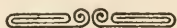
going to do? The Fox thought first of one way, then of another, and while he was debating the hounds came nearer and nearer, and at last the Fox in his confusion was caught up by the hounds and soon killed by the huntsmen. Miss Puss, who had been looking on, said: One safe way is enough for me.

Men's natural tempers will best direct them to their proper sphere, in the pursuit of happiness.

THE KINGFISHER AND THE SPARROW.

As a Kingfisher was sitting beneath the shade, upon the banks of a river, she was surprised on a sudden by the fluttering of a Sparrow, that had eloped from the neighboring town, to visit her. When the first compliments were over, How is it possible, said the Sparrow, that a bird so finely adorned, can think of spending all her days in the very depth of retirement! The golden plumage of your breast, the shining azure of your pinions, were never given you to be concealed, but to attract the wonder of beholders. Why then should you not endeavor to know the world, and be, at the same time, yourself, both known and admired? You are very complaisant at least, replied the Kingfisher, to conclude that my being admired would be the consequence of my being known. But it has sometimes been my lot, in the lonesome valleys that I frequent, to hear the complaints of beauty that has been neglected; and of worth that has been despised. Possibly it does not always happen, that even superior excellence is found to excite admiration, or to obtain encouragement. I have learned besides, not to build my happiness upon the opinion of others, so much as upon my own conviction, and the approbation of my own heart. Remember, I am a Kingfisher; these woods and streams are my delight: and so long as they are free from winds and tempests, believe me, I am perfectly content with my situation. Why therefore should I court the noise and bustle of the world, which I find so little agreeable to my native disposition? It may be the joy of a Sparrow to

indulge his curiosity, and to display his eloquence. I, for my part, love silence, privacy, and contemplation; and think that everyone should consult the native bias of his temper, before he chooses the way of life in which he expects to meet with happiness.



The goodness of Providence, apparent in his works, is a proper motive for tranquillity amidst every exertion of his power.

THE HERMIT.

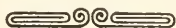
A certain Hermit had scooped his cave near the summit of a lofty mountain, from whence he had an opportunity of surveying a large extent both of sea and land. He sat, one evening, contemplating with pleasure on the various objects that lay diffused before him. The woods were dressed in the brightest verdure; the thickets adorned with the gayest blossoms. The birds carolled beneath the branches; the lambs frolicked around the meads; the peasant whistled beside his team; and the ships driven by gentle gales were returning safely into their proper harbors. In short, the arrival of spring had doubly enlivened the whole scene before his eye; and every object yielded a display either of beauty or of happiness.

On a sudden arose a violent storm. The winds mustered all their fury, and whole forests of oak lay scattered on the ground. Darkness instantly succeeded; hail-stones and rain were poured forth in cataracts, and lightning and thunder added horror to the gloom.

And now the sea piled up in mountains bore aloft the

largest vessels, while the horrid uproar of its waves drowned the shrieks of the wretched mariners. When the whole tempest had exhausted its fury, it was instantly followed by the shock of an earthquake.

The poor inhabitants of the neighboring villages flocked in crowds to our Hermit's cave; fully convinced, that his well-known sanctity would be able to protect them in their distress. They were, however, not a little surprised at the profound tranquillity that appeared in his countenance. My friends, said he, be not dismayed. Terrible to me, as well as to you, would have been the war of elements we have just beheld; but that I have meditated with so much attention on the various works of Providence, as to be persuaded that his goodness is equal to his power.

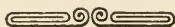


Common honesty is a better principle than what we often compliment with the name of heroism.

THE WOLF AND THE SHEPHERD'S DOG.

A Wolf ranging over the forest came within the borders of a sheep-walk; when meeting with the Shepherd's Dog, that with a surly sort of growl demanded his business there, he thought proper to put on as innocent an appearance as he could, and protested upon his honor that he meant not the least offense. I am afraid, said the Dog, the pledge of your honor is but a poor deposit for your honesty; you must not take it amiss, if I object to the security. No slur upon my reputation, replied the Wolf, I beg of you. My sense of honor is as delicate, as my great achievements are renowned. I would not leave

a stain upon my memory for the world. The fame of what are commonly called great achievements is very precious, to be sure, returned the Dog; almost equal to the character of an excellent butcher, a gallant highway-man, or an expert assassin. While the Dog was yet speaking, a lamb happened to stray within reach of our hero. The temptation was stronger than he was able to resist: He sprung upon his prey, and was scouring hastily away with it. However, the Dog seized, and held him, till the arrival of the Shepherd, who took measures for his execution. Just as he was going to dispatch him, I observe, says the Dog, that one of your noble achievements, is the destruction of the innocent. You are welcome to the renown, as you are also to the reward of it. As for me, I shall prefer the credit of having honestly defended my master's property, to any fame you have acquired by thus heroically invading it.



Never soar aloft on an enemy's pinions.

THE TORTOISE AND THE BIRDS.

A Tortoise desired to change its place of residence, so he asked an Eagle to carry him to his new home, promising her a rich reward for her trouble. The Eagle agreed, and seizing the Tortoise by the shell with her talons, soared aloft. On their way they met a Crow, who said to the Eagle: Tortoise is good eating. The shell is too hard, said the Eagle, in reply. The rocks will soon crack the shell, was the Crow's answer, and the Eagle, taking the hint, let fall the Tortoise on a sharp rock, and the two birds made a hearty meal off the Tortoise.

The Two
Birds
made a
hearty meal

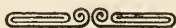


off
the Tortoise.

The candid reader will find improvement where the forward critic finds only matter of censure.

THE BEE AND THE SPIDER.

On the leaves and flowers of the same shrub, a Spider and a Bee pursued their several occupations; the one covering her thighs with honey; the other distending his bag with poison. The Spider, as he glanced his eye obliquely at the Bee, was ruminating with spleen on the superiority of her productions. And how happens it, said he, in a peevish tone, that I am able to collect nothing but poison, from the self-same plant that supplies thee with honey? My pains and industry are not less than thine; in those respects, we are each indefatigable. It proceeds only, replied the Bee, from our opposite tempers and constitution. The benevolence and sweetness of my disposition gives a similar flavor to everything I touch; whereas thy malignity turns even that to poison, which by a different process had been the purest of honey.

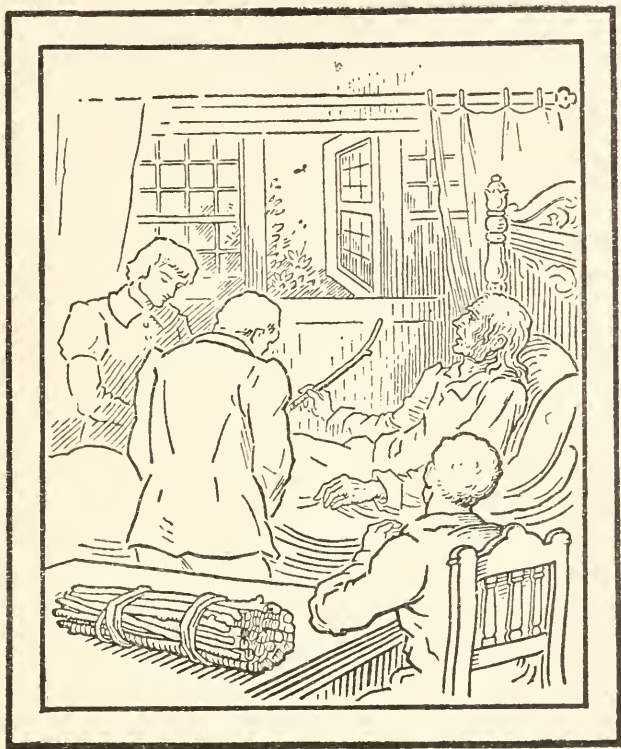


Union gives strength.

THE BUNDLE OF STICKS.

An old man on the point of death summoned his sons around him to give them some parting advice. He ordered his servants to bring in a faggot of sticks, and said to his eldest son: Break it. The son strained and strained, but with all his efforts was unable to break the

Bundle. The other sons also tried, but none of them was successful. Untie the faggots, said the father, and each of you take a stick. When they had done so, he

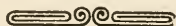


called out to them: Now break; and each stick was easily broken. You see my meaning, said their father. Let affection bind you to one another. Together you are strong; separated you are weak.

It is the fate of envy to attack even those characters
which are superior to its malice

THE SNAIL AND THE STATUE.

A Statue of the Medicean Venus was erected in a grove sacred to beauty and the fine arts. Its modest attitude, its elegant proportions, assisted by the situation in which it was placed, attracted the regard of every delicate observer. A Snail, who had fixed himself beneath the moulding of the pedestal, beheld with an evil eye the admiration it excited. Wherefore, watching his opportunity, he strove, by trailing his filthy slime over every limb and feature, to obliterate those beauties which he could not endure to hear so much applauded. An honest linnet, however, who observed him at his dirty work, took the freedom to assure him that he would infallibly lose his labor: For although, said he, to an injudicious eye, thou mayst sully the perfections of this finished piece; yet a more accurate and close inspector will admire its beauty, through all the blemishes with which thou hast endeavored to disguise it.



Beauty joined with innocence is universally respected;
malice added to deformity is universally abhorred.

THE TOAD AND THE GOLDFISH.

As a Goldfish, newly brought from the warm regions of the East, displayed his beauties in the sun; a Toad, who had long eyed him with no small degree of envy, broke out into this exclamation: How partial and how fan-

tastic is the favor of mankind! Regardless of every excellence that is obvious and familiar; and only struck with what is imported from a distant climate at a large expense! What a pompous basin is here constructed, and what extreme fondness is here shown, for this insignificant stranger! When a quadruped of my importance is neglected, shunned, and even persecuted. Surely were I to appear in China, I should receive the same or perhaps greater honors than are lavished here upon this tinsel favorite.

The Goldfish, conscious of his real beauty, and somewhat angry to be thus insulted by so very unsightly and deformed a creature, made this rational reply: It must be confessed that the opinions of men are sometimes guided by the caprice you mention. Yet, as for me and the rest of my tribe, it is well known that if we are admired abroad, we are not less admired at home; being there esteemed by the greatest mandarins, fed by stated officers, and lodged in basins as superb as any your nation has to boast. Perhaps then, notwithstanding your sage remark, there are some virtues and some qualities that please or disgust almost universally; and as innocence joined to beauty seldom fails to procure esteem, so malice added to deformity will cause as general a detestation.



Only cowards insult dying majesty.

THE SICK LION.

A Lion, worn out with old age, lay drawing his last breath, and several of the beasts who had formerly been sufferers by him came and revenged themselves. The

Boar, with his powerful tusks, ripped his flank, and the Bull gored his sides with his horns. The Ass, too, seeing there was no danger, came up and threw his heels into



the Lion's face. Thereupon the poor old expiring tyrant, with his dying groan uttered these words: How much worse than a thousand deaths it is to be spurned by so base a creature!

The man who values himself too highly on his birth has seldom much claim to any other merit.

THE MUSHROOM AND THE ACORN.

An Acorn fell from the top of an old venerable Oak, full on the head of a Mushroom that unhappily sprung up beneath it. Wounded by the blow, the Mushroom complained of the incivility. Impertinent upstart, replied the Acorn, why didst thou, with familiar boldness, approach so near to thy superiors? Shall the wretched offspring of a dunghill presume to raise its head on a spot ennobled by my ancestor for so many generations? I do not mean, returned the Mushroom, to dispute the honor of thy birth, or to put my own in competition with it. On the contrary, I must acknowledge that I hardly know from whence I sprung. But sure it is merit, and not mere ancestry, that obtains the regard of those whose approbation is truly valuable. I have little perhaps to boast, but surely thou who hast thus insulted me, canst have no pretense to any. I please the palates of mankind, and give a poignant flavor to their most elegant entertainments; while thou, with all thy boasted ancestry, art fit to fatten Hogs alone.



The gods help them that help themselves.

HERCULES AND THE WAGGONER.

A Waggoner was once driving a heavy load along a very muddy way. At last he came to a part of the road where the wheels sank half-way into the mire, and

the more the horses pulled, the deeper sank the wheels. So the Waggoner threw down his whip, and knelt down and prayed to Hercules the Strong: O Hercules, help



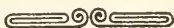
me in this my hour of distress, quoth he. But Hercules appeared to him, and said:

Tut, man, don't sprawl there. Get up and put your shoulder to the wheel.

The vulgar are captivated by the works of art; but the philosopher admires the works of nature.

THE STARS AND THE SKYROCKET.

As a Rocket, on a rejoicing night, ascended through the air, and observed the stream of light that distinguished his passage, he could not forbear exulting in his elevation, and calling upon the Stars to do him reverence. Behold, said he, what gazing multitudes admire the luster of my train, whilst all your feeble sparks of light pass unobserved, or disregarded! The Stars heard his empty boast with a silent indignation; the Dog-Star only vouchsafed to answer him. How erroneous, said he, are their conclusions who listen to the voice of popular applause! It is true, the novelty of thy appearance may procure to thee more admiration than is allotted to our daily course, although indeed a lasting miracle. But do not estimate thy importance by the capricious fancy of misguided men. Know thyself to be the useless pageant, the frail production of a mortal hand. Even while I speak, thy blaze is extinguished, and thou art sunk into oblivion. We, on the other hand, were lighted up by heaven for the advantage of mankind, and our glory shall endure forever.



The love of liberty, in well constituted minds, holds a place little inferior to that of natural affection.

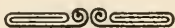
THE DOVE.

A Dove that had a mate and young ones, happening to spy her cage door open, was driven by a sudden impulse to fly out into an adjacent grove. There, perched upon the bough of a sycamore, she sat as it were wrapt in

deep contemplation; not recovering from her reverie, until the owner drew nigh unseen, and brought her back to her little family.

Art thou not ashamed then, says her mate, thus to desert thy helpless offspring? Art thou not base to abandon me, for the company of birds to whom thou art a stranger? Could I have harbored such a thought? I, who have been ever constant to our first engagement; and must have died of mere despair, hadst thou not returned to my embraces? But how, alas, returned? Not, as it seems, by choice; but ensnared by dint of artifice, and brought hither by constraint.

Have patience, replied the rambler, and hear the plea of thy repentant mate. Witness all ye powers of wedlock, ye that know what passes in the hearts of Doves, if ever, before this unhappy moment, I felt a wish to part from thee! The door, so seldom open, allowed but one moment for deliberation, and I happened to decide amiss. When removed to yonder wood, the air of liberty breathed so sweet, that, with horror I speak it, I felt a suspense about returning to the cage. Pardon, I pray thee, this one crime, and be well assured I will relapse no more. And that thou mayst be the more induced to pardon it, know that the love of liberty burns ever the strongest in bosoms that are most prone to conjugal affection and the love of young.



Seditious persons rarely weigh the cause, together with the consequence, of their impetuosity.

THE FIGHTING COCKS AND THE TURKEY.

Two Cocks of the genuine game-breed, met by chance upon the confines of their respective walks. To such great and heroic souls, the smallest matter imaginable af-

fords occasion for dispute. They approach each other with pride and indignation; they look defiance, they crow a challenge; and immediately commences a long and bloody battle. It was fought on both sides with so much courage and dexterity; they gave and they received such deep and desperate wounds; that they both lay down upon the turf utterly spent, blinded, and disabled. While this was their situation, a Turkey that had been a spectator of all that passed between them, drew near to the field of battle, and reproved them in this manner. How foolish and absurd has been your quarrel, my good neighbors! A more ridiculous one could scarce have happened, among the most contentious of all creatures, men. Because you have crowed perhaps in each other's hearing, or that one of you has picked up a grain of corn upon the territories of his rival, you have both rendered yourselves miserable for the remainder of your days



Plodding wins the race.

THE HARE AND THE TORTOISE.

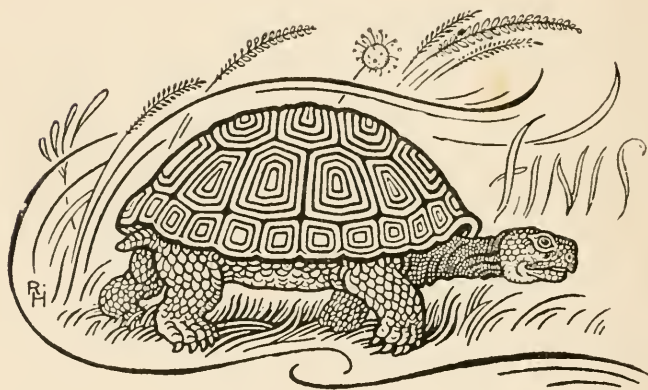
The Hare was once boasting of his speed before the other animals. I have never yet been beaten, said he, when I put forth my full speed. I challenge any one here to race with me.

The Tortoise said quietly: I accept your challenge.

That is a good joke, said the Hare; I could dance round you all the way.

Keep your boasting till you've beaten, answered the Tortoise. Shall we race?

So a course was fixed and a start was made. The Hare darted almost out of sight at once, but soon stopped and, to show his contempt for the Tortoise, lay down to have a nap. The Tortoise plodded on and plodded on and when the Hare awoke from his nap, he saw the Tortoise just near the winning-post and could not run up in time to save the race. Then said the Tortoise: Slow and steady does it



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